

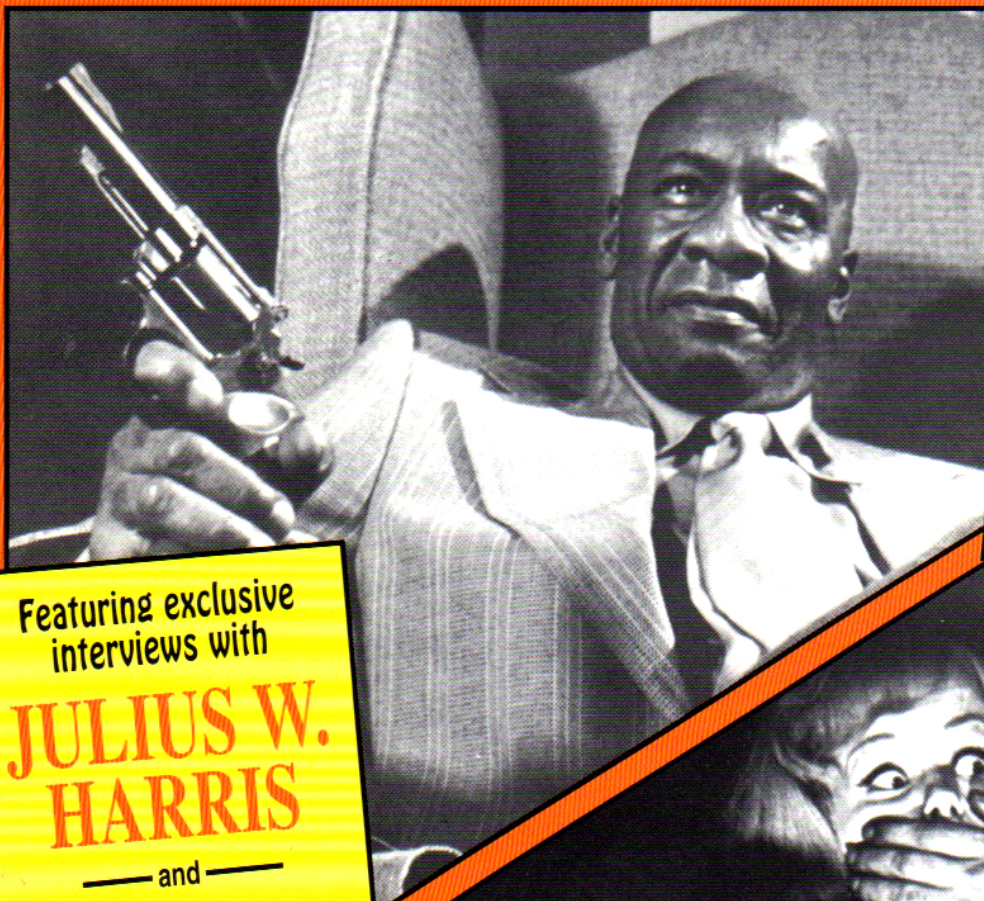
Your Guide to Cult Movies, Arthouse Oddities, Drive-In Swill, and Underground Obscurities!

SHOCK

CINEMA

Number 16 / Spring-Summer 2000

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Featuring exclusive
interviews with

**JULIUS W.
HARRIS**

— and —

Sexy '70s Starlet

**MARILYN
JOI**

Reviewed in this issue:
Play It As It Lays • Go To Hell !!
An American Dream • Baby Love
Ghostwatch • The Stone Tape
The Zebra Killer • Idiot Box
I'll Never Forget What's 'Is Name
The Pick-Up • The Moving Finger
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Welcome to the latest slopping of SHOCK CINEMA, the home-brewed magazine devoted to the most twisted niches of cult cinema. As usual, we've got tons of highly-opinionated reviews, ranging from lost treasures that deserve a look to justifiably-forgotten dreck that deserves a caustic, alcohol-fueled bashing. Yes, many of our usual film-obsessed writers have returned (with several new additions), while on a personal note, I've cut back a bit on my usual avalanche of self-written reviews for this edition, because I need a breather (since the mag's tedious business duties have been running me ragged recently). To make up for that, I'm hitting you with four kick-ass celebrity interviews. First off, we've got **Julius W. Harris**, who's best known to 007 fans for his scene-stealing, metal-handed role as Tee Hee in *LIVE AND LET DIE*, but has also appeared in such diverse fare as *BLACK CAESAR*, Dino De Laurentiis' *KING KONG*, and the critically-acclaimed *NOTHING BUT A MAN*. We also have a talk with '70s starlet **Marilyn Joi** (a/k/a Tracy King) who heated up drive-in and grindhouse screens in Al Adamson fare such as *THE NAUGHTY STEWARDESSES* and *NURSE SHERRI*, in addition to roles in everything from *KENTUCKY FRIED MOVIE* to *ILSA, HAREM KEEPER OF THE OIL SHEIKS*. If that weren't enough, we've got everyone's favorite psycho-baddie, **Sid Haig**, discussing his lengthy career — from *SPIDER BABY* poster-boy and TV-villain perennial, to kitch paychecks such as *THE FORBIDDEN DANCE* and Saturday morning's *JASON OF STAR COMMAND*. Then, rounding it all up is a talk with director **Michael Campus**, who describes the making of his '70s blaxploitation classic *THE MACK*. Man, what an array of talent! I'm proud as hell to have them all profiled in SHOCK CINEMA, and I hope you enjoy the issue (because if you don't, I've spent the last four months living like a hermit for nothing).

SUBSCRIPTION PRICES / BACK ISSUES: Single issues are \$5 (postpaid) and a 4-issue subscription is \$18 (with all checks made out directly to Steve Puchalski). Also, when sending in a first-time subscription, please let me know which issue you'd like to begin with. As usual, subscribers can keep track of when to renew by checking the upper right corner of their mailing label...For overseas readers, single issues are \$8 apiece (US currency only)...If you need back issues, #6 & 7 are \$4 apiece, while #'s 8 through 15 are \$5 each. Of course, all issues are sent via First Class Mail, so they arrive in one piece.

As I work on the first issue for the year 2000 (which also coincides with my upcoming 40th birthday), I can't help but think back to my past 15 years of 'zine publications. Yes, you heard that right. 15 fuckin' years of DIY mags. It started in 1985, as a way to maintain one's sanity while living amidst the overwhelming boredom and cultural-strangulation that embodies Syracuse, New York. It began with a variety of Xerox-zines, written by myself or my equally-imbibed cronies. There was the creativity-overload of *TRISTER KEANE'S MAGAZINE* (a mixed-bag of stories, poems, cartoons, and assorted detritus culled from my drinking

buds, then lashed together by myself), the stream-of-consciousness *LOVE'S TANGLED SLUGS* (an illustrated sci-fi/soap-opera written *en masse* after several caustic pitchers of sangria while at our now-defunct college watering hole, Hungry Charley's), as well as deranged clip-art/collage booklets like *ZARF!* and the written-while-drunk-in-a-park poetry booklet *SPOOT!* (both created with longtime pal Brian J. Edwards). Oh, they were crude all right, but it was a way to get a few hundred people to encounter our imagination straight, no chaser. Meanwhile, my only other literary outing was a short-lived poetry-chapbook from Penships Press, *THE YELLOW HUE OF BARROOM LIGHTS. THE SAME COLOR AS MY HANDS*, which spun the reader into an abyss of cheap liquor and bad relationships (which certainly mirrored my Bukowski-wannabe lifestyle at the time). Cutting to the chase, I premiered my first film-'zine *SLIMETIME* in 1986. Beginning as a few puke-green photocopied pages, stapled in the top-left corner, only 14 years later, that cinema-driven passion has evolved into the magazine you clutch in your sweaty li'l hands. Thankfully, I've had a lot of support over the years, from friends, readers and advertisers, and most recently, my lovely wife, Anna. I've also worked damned hard to arrive at this point in my life, where I can publish this magazine and allow it to take on whatever uncommercial direction I choose, squeeze in numerous freelance writing gigs, and live my life the way I've always wanted. But recently, I had an opportunity to reassess that direction, when I was approached by the owners of *SCI-FI ENTERTAINMENT* magazine, and asked if I was interested in becoming its new editor. There were other extremely-capable candidates, of course (and knowing my fondness for actual editing, I probably would've sucked at the job), but this type of life-changing decision made me rethink my current lifestyle — since taking on an overwhelming, corporate job would certainly put SHOCK CINEMA on hiatus for an unknown period, and maybe even kill it altogether. So, should I ditch the one creative outlet that I truly love, in order to make more money at a highly-regarded, albeit mainstream magazine? Well, although it's difficult to control some things in life, such as thinning hair and a thickening waistline, this one was easy — as I politely declined this all-too-generous offer. Am I stupid? Perhaps. But I also realize that life is far too short, and if you're going to bust your ass working, it should be at something that you're truly passionate about. And while publishing this mag and writing 'til the wee hours of the morning certainly leaves me exhausted at times, it's a *good* type of exhaustion, which mixes well with the Bushmills and coffee. Plus, thank goodness for small favors, such as last year's refreshing vacation in New Orleans (one of the few cities that I'd actually consider moving to, once the NYC area has lost its allure); a great apartment, wife and cat (all of which help me maintain my tenuous sanity); and readers who continually keep me energized with their positive feedback... But enough of my nonsense. Grab a beverage of your choice (preferably with a Proof above 80), find a comfortable chair or toilet seat, and enjoy the new issue. 3/31/00

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Cover photos: Top - Julius W. Harris in *HELL UP IN HARLEM*. Bottom- Sid Haig in *SPIDER BABY*

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"KICKING ASS AND TAKING NAMES"



The Second Time Around: For Actor **JULIUS W. HARRIS** Life Begins Anew at 40

By STEVE RYFLE

You may not know his name, but you know his face. And you know that big, bold, shiny bald head.

Whatever he does, Julius Harris is an actor who leaves his mark. His film work has run the gamut from Ivan Dixon's embittered alcoholic father in Michael Roemer's *NOTHING BUT A MAN* (1964) to the voodoo tobacconist in *SHRUNKEN HEADS* (1994). During his career of 30-years-plus, he appeared in Blaxploitation films (*TROUBLE MAN*, *FRIDAY FOSTER*), lowbrow comedies (*GORP*, *FIRST FAMILY*, *GOING BERSERK*, *MY CHAUFFER*), major studio pictures (*THE TAKING OF PELHAM ONE TWO THREE*, *ISLANDS IN THE STREAM*, *KING KONG*), arthouse movies (*TO SLEEP WITH ANGER*), and many TV shows and mini-series.

Whatever the movie, Harris always brought his combination of toughness, street smarts and civility. These traits are all evident in his best-known role, in the James Bond adventure *LIVE AND LET DIE* (1973) as Yaphet Kotto's disfigured (and gleefully devilish) henchman Tee Hee, who lost one arm to a hungry crocodile named Albert. They can be seen in his portrayal of Papa Gibbs, Fred Williamson's absentee father-turned-gangster in Larry Cohen's *BLACK CAESAR* and the sequel *HELL UP IN HARLEM* (both 1973), and in his turn as Scatter, the ex-dope dealer who ventures back into the drug trade, and pays with his life, in *SUPERFLY* (1972).

If Harris (b. 1923) brings worldliness and wisdom to his roles, it's because he's lived his life fully. He was about 40 by the time he started acting in the first place, and since then he's amassed more credits than most actors do in a full lifetime on stage and screen. The son of a musician father and former Cotton Club dancer mother, Harris grew up during the Depression and went into the Army during WWII, fighting in Europe in an all-black combat unit. He can remember little English girls looking at Black American soldiers and telling their mothers, "Gee, he hasn't got a tail!" He's served jail time, and he's faced the prejudice that came with marrying a white woman in the 1960's. And he started out as a middle-aged man in a career that favors youth. In short, Harris knows what obstacles are all about; he's spent his life overcoming them.

SC: You didn't become an actor until you were about 40, so tell us about your upbringing and what you did before you got into acting.

Harris: I was a street boy out of Philadelphia. Went into the war in '42, survived all of that, came out and became an orderly, then I became a nurse. They had what they called a "practical nurse" situation in Philadelphia at that time, but I don't know what they call it now. After I became a

nurse, and while I was working at the University of Pennsylvania Hospital, I studied and learned a bit more, and then I became a private duty nurse, and then I went to New York.

At one time I was a musician, a drummer. I played when I was in the service, and I played a little bit professionally. Acting was the farthest thing from my mind. In fact, I really didn't know where I wanted to go in the 1950's. I got out of the Army, and I had to look around to see where the hell I was going. And then, fortunately, when I

struggling, they had to pray for a job. I was working as a private duty nurse, so, consequently, I always had money in my pocket and I would always buy them beers and what have you. I also liked them personally. Charles Gordone and I were like *that* [clenches his two fists together]. Yaphet Kotto was around too. Back then he was just a young cat from the islands, or from Africa, wherever he's from. He was part of that group, as was Moses Gunn. We wound up being competitors, Moses and I. Because of our size and type, we ended up competing for roles. That was fine with me. I never got to the point where I would sit home and brood about somebody else getting the job. If they got the job, that's all well and good, because if they're working, then the next job is mine. That's how I looked at it.

SC: In addition to nursing, what other work did you do?

Harris: I worked as a building superintendent, I was with a moving company, schlepping furniture up and down four flights. I was a bartender, bouncer, you know, I survived in the Village before I really got into acting, before things really got going for me.

SC: I heard a story where you were bartending at the College of Complexes [a saloon and beatnik hangout in the 1950's and 60's, frequented by writers and artists], and the junior Mafia came in and hassled you.

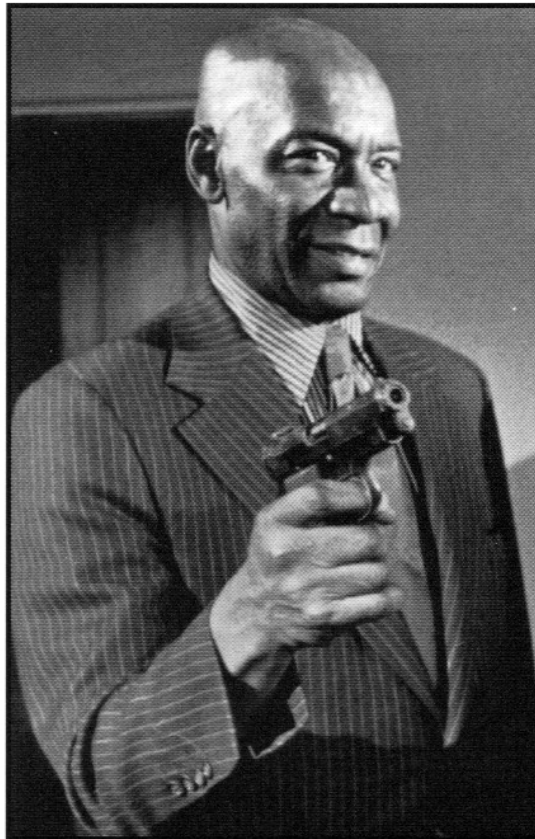
Harris: The College of Complexes, that was on 10th Street, right off of Seventh Avenue. It's called the Ninth Circle now — that is, if it's still there. It was owned by a cat by the name of Slim Brundage, who was out of Chicago. He had this particular club where a lot of young people used to come, especially kids from Jersey, because when they were 18 they could come over to New York and drink. It could get a little rowdy sometimes, so I was the strong-arm, I had to bend a few heads.

SC: So you were pretty tough in those days?

Harris: I took care of myself. I didn't go around punching out anybody, but let me put it to you this way: Don't fuck with me. I didn't go around messing with people, but if you fuck with me, your ass belongs to me.

SC: What did these Mafia types want?

Harris: They wanted to get rid of Slim. They didn't like his attitude, in reference to them. He opened up the bar in the Village just to aggravate the mob. Across the street was Julius', across the street was another restaurant that was run by the mob, the whole area was controlled by the Italian Mafia. Tony Bender was the guy's name who was run-



Julius W. Harris as gun-totin' Papa Gibbs in *HELL UP IN HARLEM*

moved to New York to do private duty nursing, I lived in the Village. And there I met such luminaries in the business as Charles Gordone, who wrote the play *NO PLACE TO BE SOMEBODY* [and who also acted in *COONSKIN* and *ANGEL HEART*], and Lou Gossett, and Robert Hooks, and all those beautiful actors back there in the 1960's. And I got involved with them.

There was a bar called the Riviera, right there at West 4th Street and Seventh Avenue in the Village; I don't know if it's still there any more. We used to hang out there. Of course, I made more money than those cats did at the time; they were

ning everything. The older cats, the old mob guys, they liked me, for the simple reason that I gave no shit. But I didn't take any, either. It was these young wannabe Mafiosos, who wanted to be made, who used to give me a hard time. So they would come in and try to intimidate people. They figured if you started losing customers, business would fall off. But I didn't allow it. I wasn't afraid of them.

in a hotel right across the street from Washington Square Park. So I took the script and put it on my dresser and I let it lay there. I had about a month and a half before I had to go and do the audition in front of the camera. But then, one day, curiosity made me pick it up. I started reading it, and I began to like how the story was unfolding. So I said, "I'll give it a try." I learned the scenes, and I prepared for the screen test, but I made one mis-

ing, and Mike yells, "action," then "cut." He says, "Julius, you have to grab her breast." I say, "OK." We go around a second time. "Cut. Julius, grab her breast!" Third time around, Gloria said to me, "Damn it, will you grab my fucking breast so we can get the hell out of here?" I said, "If that's the way you feel about it, lady, your breast is grabbed!"

"I had fun in the uniform, playing a cop. We were shooting all over New York, and the cats on the street didn't know I wasn't a real cop. So, sometimes I would fuck with them, the junkies and what have you." — On *THE TAKING OF PELHAM ONE TWO THREE*

But the Riviera was my spot. You could find me there anytime, any day that I wasn't working. When I was a private duty nurse, I would work a day shift and I had my nights off. Then, when I got into acting, I set it up so I could make my rounds during the day, which I didn't know a damn thing about at first. I was literally a rookie in my mid-30's in the business. And yet, I was an old man on the age level of all these other cats. They used to call me "old man."

SC: How did you start acting?

Harris: Charles Gordone was doing casting for *NOTHING BUT A MAN*. They had gotten the whole cast, except for this one character, the one-armed drunk. Then, at that time, I didn't know a damn thing about acting. I wasn't afraid to be in front of people, because I had been a musician, but the fundamentals of acting never crossed my mind. But I used to mess with these guys at the bar. I'd say, "you guys call yourselves fucking actors? You're broke all the time, you can't even get a damn job, why aren't you out in Hollywood!" That type of attitude. Then I said, "I can do this with my arms tied behind my back."

But my bluff was called on *NOTHING BUT A MAN*. One day I walked into the bar and Charles said, "about a year ago, you ran your mouth about how you could act with your arms tied behind your back. I've got a job for you." I couldn't say 'no,' because Yaphet was sitting there, Moses was sitting there, plus Gordone. Al Freeman was there, and a couple of other actors. So I said, "OK, yeah. I'll do it. I'll show you." So Chuck said to me, "all right, since you say you can do it, I want you to come to the Flatiron Building at 23rd Street and Fifth Avenue, and meet Mike Roemer and Bob Young." I said, "Yeah, I'll be there," but I'm thinking in my mind, "I'm no actor. I've never been in front of a camera or on stage, and when Mike and Bob see me, they'll say, 'thank you, but no thank you, we need somebody with experience,' and I'm off the hook." But it didn't work that way. I go up there, and the minute I walk through the door, Mike Roemer said, "You're it." I said, "What do you mean I'm it?" And he said, "We want you to take this part of Will." And he gave me the script.

At that time, I was doing private duty nursing, and I was living

take. Due to the fact that Will Anderson was a one-armed drunk in the movie, I figured I had to be that, in order to be authentic when I got in front of the camera. So, I bought me a half-pint of Green River bourbon, some of the worst stuff in the world. And I took the bus up Fifth Avenue to 23rd Street, and by the time I get off the bus, I'm drunk out of my mind. But I managed to get upstairs. Mike Roemer looked at me and said, "If you're the man I think you are, you go home and sober up, and come back the next day and do this screen test." Well, I became embarrassed, because Gloria Foster was there, Ivan Dixon was there, and Charles Gordone. So I went home, sobered up and came back the next day, and I did my master shot in one, my close-ups in two, and I had the job. And that's when the bug bit me, then and there. The rest of it's history. That's how I started

SC: It's a great performance. Will is so bitter and unfulfilled, and he can't even die decently. He expires in the car, en route to the hospital.

Harris: Let me tell you about that scene. We're doing the scene, and I'm supposed to grab Gloria by the breast, as my last gesture. It looks great on paper, but I didn't really know this woman, all I knew was she was a fine actress. And I really didn't want to grab her breast. I'd make an attempt, but I'd keep missing, because I didn't want to insult her. Not realizing, of course, that actors do that. So we're in the car, we go around the build-

SC: In the second half of the 1960's, you were mostly doing plays, right?

Harris: When *NOTHING BUT A MAN* came out, [character actor] William Hickey, who lived in the Village, came up to me. I knew who he was, but I wasn't really part of the acting community. Bill said he wanted me to come up and monitor his classes. I had the bug then, and I was ready to go anywhere I had to go to learn, so I went to Herbert Berghof Studios. I also had an offer from the Actor's Studio, but that never panned out. After that, I did a play called "The Amen Corner" [written by James Baldwin], which toured the United States, around 1965 or '66. It was a mythical story where this deacon is confronted by all these demons trying to stop him from being a decent deacon. He has all these troubles in his mind, and they were manifest on stage. I played the deacon, and David Downey and Arthur Finch played the North and the South. Graham Brown played a mythical god, and Esther Rolle played my African thing.

SC: Tell me about working with Ivan Dixon.

Harris: Ivan Dixon was a very, very close friend. He helped me out in the beginning, on *NOTHING BUT A MAN*, in fact, everyone on that film sat down and worked with me. But Ivan and I became very good friends, and we still are. He lives in Hawaii now, he's got a jazz radio station there. I would say Ivan is one of the few men that I love. He showed me the way, and after a while, I became the mentor.

SC: What was it like to be directed by him in *TROUBLE MAN*?

Harris: Oh, it was a kick in the head! He knew what I could do. He'd say, "All right Julius. I don't want 20,000 takes here, let's get it on." Everything was copacetic, he wasn't tedious and overbearing when I worked with him. Of course, he was like that with everybody. He was an actor's director, and a great guy.

SC: In the early 1970's, you appeared in several "Blaxploitation" movies. How did you feel about those pictures, given all the criticism of them from Black groups like the NAACP and CORE?

Harris: They were the ones who used the term "Blaxploitation." A lot of people thought it was invented by whites, but it wasn't. It was invented by the Urban League, the NAACP, those groups. What did I think about it? I said, "Thank God. It's about time the door was kicked down, and fortunately I was part of that. To this day, I am proud of the fact that I helped kick that door down. I thought it was the greatest thing that could have happened. Look at the products that have come out of it: Denzel, Will Smith, Charles Dutton,



all these cats that have come up, who were able to move in to the room. Yes, I think it was the greatest thing that could have happened to film. We bailed Hollywood out. We've always said that if it hadn't been for the Black films back in those days, Hollywood would have died. They weren't making a damn thing but a whole lot of bullshit sitcoms.

SC: Why do you think Blaxploitation films disappeared so quickly?

Harris: It was the politics. Most of the stuff we made was independent, but then the studios realized the money-making potential and they got into it too, and then the politics started. The next thing you know, they were diluting the scripts and what have you, dictating what should be and what shouldn't be. But we didn't die out. The proof in the pudding is now. Those films are still out there. People from all over the country come up to me and say, "we know you." So our stuff is still out there, it didn't die, and it won't die now. It can't.

SC: You were in SUPERFLY, one of the most controversial films of that era.

Harris: That was a film that almost didn't get finished. We had to scrounge, literally scrounge for locations to do scenes. Running from the cops, fighting with gangs so they wouldn't steal our equipment. The gangs wanted to be paid off. You remember the cemetery scene? We had two guys standing out on the street guarding our truck. We had to slip into the cemetery, do a quick scene, and then get out. But meanwhile, the gangs were across the street and they wanted to get paid before we set up camp. But we were a bunch of street cats too. We may have been actors, but we were no pussies, so that took care of that.

And, above all else, I remember having to fight the producers for our money. Sig Shore. As far as I'm concerned, he's the world's worst. It's my understanding that the picture opened in Europe before it opened here. And in the first two weeks it was open, it made \$20 million. It was something brand new, and the Europeans wanted to see it, and of course it's a classic now. I don't know for sure, but regardless, it made a hell of a lot of money. And we had to find Sig Shore to get our money. Today I may get \$15 on it, but that doesn't matter. The film is out there.

As far as working on the film, it was a great group. Curtis Mayfield's music, Carl Lee's performance, and of course Ron O'Neal. Unfortunately for Ron, he was having a problem because he was too close to either side of the track. He's very light skinned, but he couldn't go white, and he couldn't really give himself over as a Black man. We thought of him as Black, but he always, for some reason, thought he should be Laurence Olivier or something. That was what he really wanted to do, but he couldn't break through. Superfly was the thing that really put him on the map, but he's still struggling today, I understand,



Harris as the claw-handed villain Tee Hee with his LIVE AND LET DIE co-stars

trying to find something decent.

SC: Gordon Parks Jr. was still developing as a film director when he died. What do you remember about him?

Harris: I loved Gordon Jr., and I loved his father. His father directed me in SHAFT'S BIG SCORE. His father was the first one to make me shave my head. Moses Gunn was playing Bumpy Jonas, the gangster, and I played the captain of the precinct. If you notice, I had a bald head and a big fake mustache. Moses and I were so much alike, so Gordon said, "How would you mind changing your image? Shave your head." Well, I didn't have much hair up there anyhow, so I shaved it, and it's been my trademark ever since. Now every time I turn around, these youngsters are running around with bald heads!

Gordon Jr. knew what he was doing, he knew where he was coming from and where he was going. Junior was very outgoing, young, party time. The father was sharp, reserved, the elite. They were very different. The father lived up there on Park Avenue, and Junior lived down there in the Village.

SC: You started playing villains frequently in the '70s, like Tee Hee in LIVE AND LET DIE.

Harris: That was a trip. Four weeks in Jamaica, ten weeks in London. The best of care. Roger Moore, a quality gentleman. The whole cast, the company, it was just one of those things that you wished you could get every year. I got paid a little more too — this was when I was starting to be paid better, and I was married and had a family to take care of.

SC: How did the prosthetic arm work?

Harris: The piece went over my arm, and there was an air tube that went up my arm and down

through my shoulder blades, and into a little pneumatic bottle. So, when I had to feed the crocodiles, and I reached into the barrel and pulled out a piece of raw chicken, I had to move my shoulder in a certain way to open and close the hand. But when we had the fight scene, after Roger broke the cables on my mechanical arm [exposing the mechanical parts of the prosthetic], my real arm was pinned back behind me, and the mechanical arm was built off of the shoulder. That was a little excruciating, because they had to make sure the back part was hidden, so they could match the shoulder.

SC: The fight on the train, between Tee Hee and Bond is great.

Harris: Roger and I did that. No stuntman. The only time we had a stuntman was when you see me go out the window. We choreographed that thing together.

I loved playing the villain, it didn't bother me. Because of that, I got lots of work. How many black villains were around back then? Very few, I

recall. Before my mother died, she called me up one day, when she was watching me on TV. She said, "Julius, I've known you all your life, and you always had a beautiful smile. Can't you smile just once?" So, when I got LIVE AND LET DIE, she loved it, because I was smiling all the time.

SC: Around that time, you were the main character in a TV series called SALT.

Harris: We did 20 episodes of that, and it did pretty well, but unfortunately, the British cat who was producing it absconded with the money. That was shot in the Bahamas, it was a great shoot. It was a family series. I was a lawyer who had retired to the Bahamas and opened up this marina. And there were these two boys, whose father was dead. I had been the father's friend, and the boys didn't have anywhere to go, so they came to live with me. And we found this baby sea lion, and it grew up with the boys. I don't know where those episodes are now today.

SC: What was it like working on THE TAKING OF PELHAM ONE TWO THREE?

Harris: That was a great two weeks for me. First of all, I had fun in the uniform, playing a cop. We were shooting all over New York, and the cats on the street didn't know I wasn't a real cop. So, sometimes I would fuck with them, the junkies and what have you. That was shot mostly shot on the east side, Herald Square area.

SC: I love when Walter Matthau tells your character, "I thought you were taller."

Harris: I'll tell you about that. It was a line that came off the top of his head. He felt, and I also felt that when he came to the car, for some reason or another the dialogue that was written for that particular scene didn't work. So Matthau said, let's have some fun with this moment. Our characters

had talked to each other on the radio, but they had never seen each other. For him to meet me, the chief inspector, and find out that I'm black, that would kind of throw him for a loop. So he came out with that line, and I reacted to it.

SC: You made one movie with Sidney Poitier, LET'S DO IT AGAIN.

Harris: That was absolutely fun to do. Sidney and I were friends, because I had known him in his youth, when he was living in the Village, before he really got going. I remember when he used to wash dishes. But that was a great film to do. Sidney was a great director, knew what he wanted, and treated his people and the cast excellently. And Bill Cosby, that man kept you in stitches. Half the time, you didn't know what he was going to do. The scene where he comes into the dining room, and the gangsters are sitting around the table, having a breakfast of steak and eggs, remember that scene? He comes in, and he's got on this big apple hat, and these pants, that whole outfit he had. We had never seen the outfit, not even in dress rehearsal. When he came through that door, and he did that little hop, we broke up. The way he came through that door, even Sidney broke up. After about 10 minutes Sidney had to tell everyone, OK, let's cool it, let's get this shot together.

There was another moment I cherished in that film, when we did the scene with Billy Eckstine, who played the croupier or what have you. And the morning Eckstine came to work, we all knew he was coming and we were all there at 8:00 getting ready, and he didn't come in until 10:00. We had all planned to greet him, and as he came onto the set, we all sang, "Everything I have is yours..." which cracked him up, you know. It was things like that. John Amos was fresh out of football, and when we were doing those running scenes, we used to tell him, "Man, slow down! We're not running no goddam football game here!" And Sidney worked our butts off. He made sure he got what he wanted.

SC: What was Calvin Lockhart like? He was supposed to be the next Poitier, but he had a rep for being an egomaniac.

Harris: He was, and he almost lost his gig on that film. He definitely lost his reputation, as far as we were concerned. He was always late, and he always came with an entourage of broads, which was not necessary. When he got on the set, he was all right, because none of us actors would stand any shit, nor would Sidney. But as far as getting there, and his attitude when he got there, he almost lost his job. And he lost his reputation, because a lot of people didn't want to hire him after that.

SC: When Godfrey Cambridge died of a heart attack on the set of the TV movie VICTORY AT ENTEBBE, they needed you to step into his role as Idi Amin immediately, right?

Harris: That was a one-day shoot. It happened so fast. Godfrey dropped dead while filming the last scene. The day he dropped dead, I got a call from my agent that night, saying they wanted me over at Warner Bros. tomorrow at 8:00 a.m. I said, "Shit, I can't go and do that damned thing. It's 52 pages of dialogue, four different scenes." You remember how much Idi Amin talked in that thing? But I went in at 8:00 a.m., and they had taken Godfrey's uniform and cut it down so it would fit me. They gave me a videotape and I watched Idi Amin's gestures and mannerisms while he was talking to British reporters in Uganda. Meanwhile, I got the script in front of me. At 12:00 noon I met with a voice coach so I could more or less get the British accent down properly. At 2:00 that afternoon, after lunch, I started shooting. I finished at



Harris as Inspector Daniels, with Walter Matthau in THE TAKING OF PELHAM ONE TWO THREE

about a quarter to 12:00 that night. Aaron Spelling was the producer, and when I finished that evening and was leaving, he met me when I was getting into the car. He thanked me, and he said, "you've got a bonus coming." I got a \$2,000 bonus from him personally, which was nice. It was one of those shoots where I knew I had to have my shit together, because the main characters in the cast were all from New York, from Broadway. Helen Hayes was sitting there, she kissed me right here [points to his head] after the scene was over. I didn't wash that spot for a week!

I really didn't want to do the movie, because Godfrey and I were close friends. But then I realized it had to be done. I was under a lot of pressure, but I didn't have to memorize everything. For Idi Amin's big speech, the scene in the hangar, there were cue cards, so all I had to do was stay in character. I really enjoyed playing this evil character, and it came out pretty good, to the point that Idi Amin even invited me over to Uganda to see him. But I said no way, baby.

SC: Jessica Lange has said that you sort of took her under your wing during the making of KING KONG. What was your relationship like with her?

Harris: She was a model out of New York, and she got this gig in KING KONG, but she was like a fish

out of water. All these guys were hitting on her. Not Jeff [Bridges], but Charles Grodin, De Laurentiis, and everybody was trying to get into her pants. And I became, more or less, her protector. When we were shooting on location in Hawaii, her apartment was just above mine. So if she wanted to escape all those guys, she'd come down to my apartment, and we became good friends. And I helped her in putting her scenes together. Even back then, I knew she had it. Then, later on, when she did THE POSTMAN ALWAYS RINGS TWICE, I said, "Yeah!"

SC: My favorite part of the movie is when all the Petrox guys are trying to cross the gorge on a fallen tree trunk, and Kong sends them plunging to their deaths. Only you survived!

Harris: Yeah, and then I come back to the camp and Grodin says, "where's the rest of 'em?" I worked on that film a total of eight and a half months. What happened was, we shot all the exteriors in Hawaii, then we came back to the states. And then Dino put us on hold, the whole company, all the crew. And we would work one day, maybe two days a month, but every week we got paid. I loved it — for eight and a half months! That's more or less when I became a permanent resident of Los Angeles. I had to stay in town, I couldn't go back to New York, because you never knew when Dino was going to call.

SC: The delays were due to problems with the special effects, right?

Harris: That's what took so long. They thought they'd have it ready, and we'd go in,

do the blue screening very quickly, but the monster didn't work. So they had to keep us on hold, which was fine with me. I didn't complain, in fact nobody complained.

SC: This was the first time you worked with special effects, so was it difficult to perform with an imaginary giant ape?

Harris: You know, we had a good sense of the ape, because they had one model of his body sitting on the sound stage. And the one thing that Dino insisted that the whole crew do, before we started the picture, was go to the San Diego Zoo and observe the gorillas there.

SC: You became an actor in the era of the civil rights movement. Did you feel a responsibility to make a political statement through your work?

Harris: In our particular case, it was necessary to make a political statement. Normally, as an actor, I would say no, you just do the film and go about your business. But in each film I did, I tried to make some kind of statement in reference to my manhood. I wasn't walking around with a flag, or taking part in marches and what have you, but what I tried to do was to let people know that we were human beings too. Rather than an angry protest, I guess I was trying to lead by example. Ω

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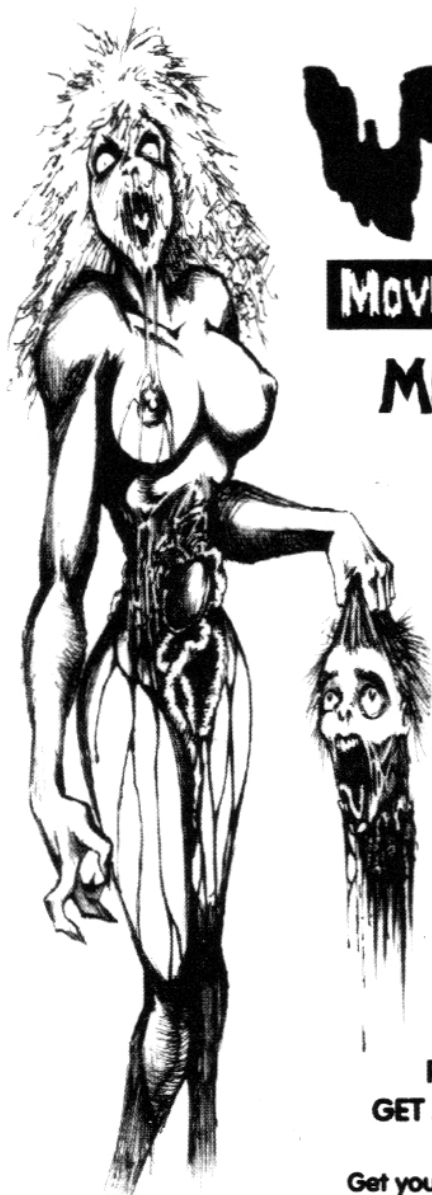
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FILM REVIEWS

PLAY IT AS IT LAYS (Shocking Videos; 1972).

I've spent years searching for a copy of this seemingly-lost movie. Why? First off, it's a pitch-black portrait of Hollywood, long before the subject became fashionable. Next, you've got top-billed Tuesday Weld playing a burnt-out beauty in one of her most luminously caustic roles. There's also Anthony Perkins (Weld's co-star in PRETTY POISON), taking a break from quirky killers as a quirky movie director. Then toss in a script by Joan Didion and then-spouse John Gregory Dunne (PANIC IN NEEDLE PARK), plus insightful direction by Frank Perry, back when his eccentric output included RANCHO DELUXE and MAN ON A SWING. With a screwed-up creative core like this, it's no wonder the film polarized critics and audiences when first released.

The storyline revolves around Maria (pronounced 'Mariah', to sound all the more pretentious) Wyeth, a 30-year-old starlet whose career is on a spiral downward after being labeled a troublemaker. Currently institutionalized, she reflects — in deliriously fragmented fashion — about what led up to her current home. Avoiding a hard-driven plot, this portrait of a breakdown prefers to touch upon all the causes, including bed-ridden catatonia, her sputtering career, a search for her father in Las Vegas, and an unexpected pregnancy (with usually-comic Chuck McCann as a backroom abortionist who calms her with "It's only tissue, Maria").

Drive-in movie favorite Adam Roarke also turns up (and is given a chance to act for a change) in the plumb role of Carter Lang, the acerbic, hot-shit filmmaker who not only solidified Wyeth's on-screen career, but married her off-screen, and now cares for her as much as he would about a truck stop he once pulled into for a piss. Meanwhile, Perkins is B.Z., Maria's best friend and the only Tinseltown connection who still adores her throwaway barbs, and ultimately propels a finale of pills, suicide and pathos.

Co-starring Tammy Grimes and THE BIONIC WOMAN's Richard Anderson as hangers-on, plus Severn Darden as a hypnotist, this cynical and withering poison pen letter takes no prisoners and reduces all of Hollywood to a dead zone. Far from perfect, the script is heavy-handed but also ripe with the stench of calous reality, obviously fueled by situations the filmmakers know all too well. Though it's hard to care about any of these broken, wealthy fuckheads, their emotional-battlefield is well worth a look for viewers attracted to self-destructive, acid-washed lives. Oddly enough, the costumes by future-shit-monger Joel Schumacher prove that the guy had talent in the industry, after all. Just don't let him out of the wardrobe closet.

GO TO HELL!! (1997).

This ultra-crude animated feature from Australia might not look like much at first glance, but give it a chance, because it's actually a raunchy-'n'-subversive sci-fi/allegory/comedy that harkens back to the earliest, most caustic days of Ralph Bakshi. Directed and *entirely*-animated by Ray Nowland, with the voices of Keith Scott and Helen Knight, this wildly sacrilegious satire rethinks the Bible's origin of mankind and the battle between God and the Devil, amidst crass jokes, graphic flesh, druggy hallucinations, and inter-species sex.

It begins when mega-businessman G.D. funds a project to save his planet's genetic make-up in a giant space-ark, just as his world destroys itself. Accompanied by his rebellious li'l son Red and a full crew,

it might take centuries to reach the next livable solar system, but thanks to a couple of suspended-animation chambers, G.D. & Son can stay young while their "eco-ship" goes through dozens of generations. As the decades spin by, the ship's population starts referring to their legendary, never-seen leader as 'God', while a newly-discovered planet is eventually groomed for their needs. A meteor is diverted in order to cleanse the place of pesky giant reptiles, genetically-altered monkey men are sent down as a cheap labor pool (with G.D.'s holographic image keeping them in line), while the ship's original crew has become so repulsively inbred over the years that they're useless.

Then there's Red, who's driven underground (along with his pet snake) and plans a revolution against his pop's oppressive ways. But unlike the usual Lucifer, this dude is an unexpected cheerleader for mankind, and along the way, we meet a hairball named Moses, learn that the Pharaoh's curses were due to radiation poisoning, and check out a surfboard-riding Jesus (which explains how he walked on water).

From mankind's earliest incarnations, right up to the 20th century (with God in league with Hitler!), the film gloriously self-destructs in the final moments, but crams a wealth of imagination into only 73 minutes. More outrageous than any wimpy studio effort would dare, where else will you see God portrayed as a self-centered, Reagan-esque fat-cat, while the Devil is actually the saner of the two. Fearlessly turning the Bible on its ass, this is one-of-a-kind epic storytelling that mixes the humor of the Furry Freak Brothers with The Old Testament, on a budget that makes SOUTH PARK look high-tech.

THE KINGDOM OF THE CROOKED MIRRORS [Korolevstvo Krivyykh Zerkal] (Something Weird Video; 1964).

There's nothing more amusing and confusing than early Russian children's fantasy flicks. They're crude, demented, (if you're lucky) horribly dubbed into English, and I'd rather get high to one of these surreal little imports than a dozen Disney flicks. In this instance, try to imagine a mix of the Brothers Grimm, Lewis Carroll and Pippi Longstocking, starring the Commie's answer to the rat-faced Olsen Twins, Olga & Tatyana Yukina.

The weirdness begins when a nine-year-old pain-in-the-ass named Ellen steps into her grandma's "fairy tale mirror" and meets her own reflection, Nelle (Get it? Ellen spelled backwards?). Together, the pair take a tour of this fantastic kingdom, while looking for Ellen's runaway cat. Way stranger than the vapid US kid-films of that time, all of the nasty rulers are human variations of animals (with appropriately backward names). When the girls see a boy being beaten for refusing to make crooked mirrors and tossed into the Tower of Death, they decide to rescue him, by sneaking into the palace of the foppish King Torrap (Anatoli Kubatsky), posing as royal pages, scampering about the countryside, and searching for the illusive key to the Tower. They're also threatened by beakish Prime Minister Kwah, green-skinned Daot (who speaks in belches) and sultry Ekanseltar, who all want to overthrow the King.

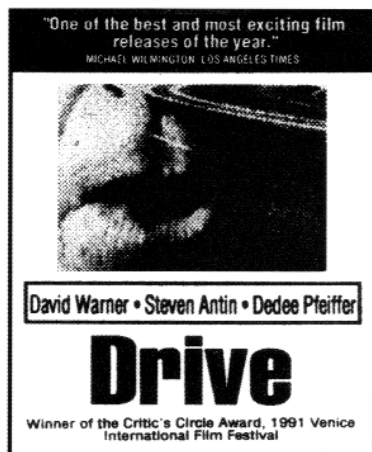
Undoubtedly, the story's political subtext sat well with Kremlin officials, since all of the power-hungry aristocrats are horribly cruel to the proletariat (and eventually get their comeuppance), while the pompous King only wants crooked mirrors in his country, because real ones expose the truth (and would undoubtedly lead to revolution). Directed by "Alexander

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Row" [a/k/a Aleksandr Rou], whose '64 JACK FROST became past MST3K fodder, the bizarre backdrops are exceptional (particularly the King's spider-themed furnishings and architecture), characters ludicrously dance about for no apparent reason, and there's even a final nerve-grating song. If you can stomach its sledgehammer do-gooder mentality (which more often than not, has you wishing the villains would drop-kick these annoying girls off a nearby cliff), this offers a colorful, 76-minute dose of Soviet silliness.



DRIVE (Shock. Videos; 1991).

With so many crappy 'indie' films readily available on video, you've got to wonder what ever happened to this hilarious gem, which had a brief theatrical run in LA and essentially vanished. Shot in black-and-white and directed by first-timer Jefery Levy, this is a blissfully eccentric road movie that's blessed with a transcendent performance by David Warner — who creates the most deliriously motor-mouthed character to slide behind the wheel of a car since Warren Oates in TWO LANE BLACKTOP.

The plot is deceptively simple and uninviting, as we spend

86 minutes watching Warner (simply known as "the Driver") on a lengthy commute to work in his Chrysler convertible, spewing his boundless knowledge and opinions to his usual Passenger (Steve Antin, of THE LAST AMERICAN VIRGIN infamy) as they deal with California traffic. Being trapped inside a car for nearly the entire film might sound dull, but cinematographer Steven Wacks' inventive visuals and Warner's non-stop, twisted monologues make it an exhausting experience — spouting his skewed opinions on everything from the homo-eroticism of football, pornography, AIDS, society in all of its forms, and Antin's "loser" life (in between swigs from his gigantic coffee cup).

Meanwhile his Passenger is suffering from a broken relationship (with Dedee Pfeiffer, Michelle's sis, who's glimpsed in fragmented memories), plus increasing annoyance at Warner's endless speeches. Hell, this guy can even talk about the act of *talking*! Eventually spinning into even loonier directions, the two discuss making a movie based on their drives, along with reverse photography, flubbed lines, and making faces into the camera. So, is there a point to it all? Not really, but it's a electrifying trip down the road to nowhere.

Warner has often stolen the show in supporting roles, and here he's given top-billing and full reign to go nuts (thanks in large part to writer Colin MacLeod's riotous rants). Thank goodness, because Antin's character is a bland, spineless twenty-something, who continually bitches, but does little to change his situation. Despite the script's constricting conceit, Levy keeps it as playful as possible, with quick cuts, glides across the car's chassis, flashbacks, strange segues, and local scenery. It's also obvious that Levy shot his creative wad on this heavily-styled tale, because his later flicks (S.F.W., INSIDE MONKEY ZETTERLAND) were annoying flops that could've been made by an entirely different person.

AN AMERICAN DREAM (J4HI; 1966).

This Hollywood castration...er, adaptation of Norman Mailer's novel is laced with wonderfully overripe sequences and performances, but is essentially just a well-mounted, fitfully-energetic studio soap opera. I haven't read the original novel, but I'd guess that a *lot* was lost in translation, since the testosterone is kept to a minimum. It also offered Stuart Whitman one of his first top-billed roles, playing rabid TV-journalist Stephen Rojack — a cross between Mike Wallace and Morton Downey Jr. —

whose life is about to go straight to hell.

When Rojack decides to divorce his drunken bitch of a millionairess wife (a lovably overwrought Eleanor Parker), she freaks out in their palatial penthouse and he 'allows' her to plummet off the high-rise patio, just in time to become a bumper ornament for a passing car. Of course, when he lies to the police that it was a suicide, they don't believe it for an instant. Adding to the drama, the car that used Parker as a road bump contains a mob boss who Rojack has been ranting about on his TV-show.

Things get more complicated (and unbelievable) when a badly-cast Janet Leigh turns up as an ex-lover turned mob-whore named Cherry, who re-ignites Rojack's passion when he catches her working at a swanky lounge. With his shrewish wife kaput, the plot slows to a crawl whenever their maudlin romance takes over. But just wait until Cherry's gangster pals learn she's ditching them for this media pain-in-the-ass. Also look for brief turns by Barry Sullivan as a police lieutenant, McCLOUD's J.D. Cannon as a tough cop, George Takei as a Mafia lawyer, and Lloyd Nolan breathing life into the final scenes as Rojack's rich-as-shit father-in-law (who has a distinctly Mailer-esque view of life and death). As for the eye candy, there's August 1966's Playboy Playmate Susan Denberg (who was also one of "Mudd's Women") as sexy maid Ruta.

Director Robert Gist is best known for helming TV-shows such as MIS-SION: IMPOSSIBLE and STAR TREK, and it certainly shows in its big-screen blandness. Meanwhile, the contrived script often loses its caustic footing in favor of cheap sentiment (but pulls itself together beautifully for a tough, no-winners climax which puts a final nail into the "American Dream"). Despite tearing into his role with all of the messy subtlety of a starving man given a Big Mac, Whitman simply isn't up for the jarring shifts in his character's emotions, which take this one-dimensional cretin from unintentionally-laughable guilt to career self-destruction. Leigh, on the other hand, is just a bland bimbo. No surprise, both Jan and Stu soon wound up in slop like the killer-bunny horror-flick NIGHT OF THE LEPUS.

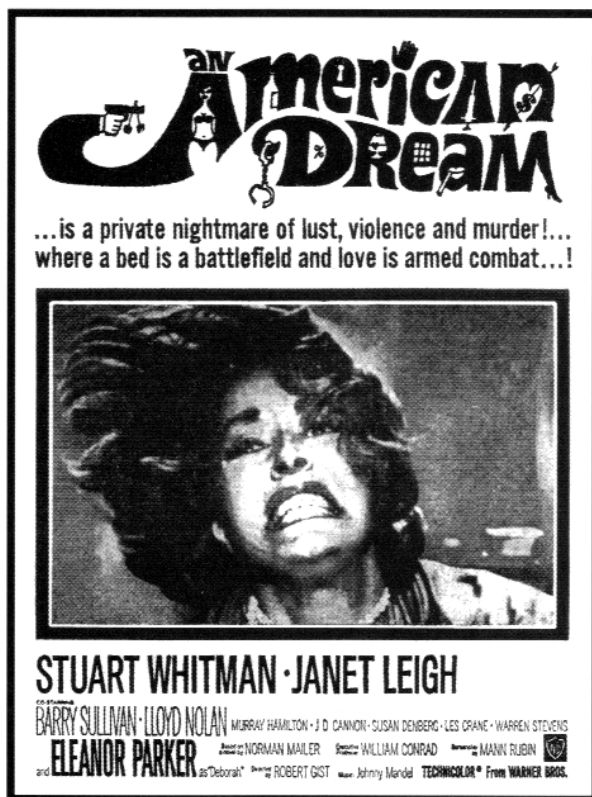
THE MOVING FINGER (Something Weird Video; 1963).

While the hippie phenomenon of the late-'60s spawned a tidal wave of cinematic grooviness, the beatniks of the early-'60s barely left an impression on the big-screen — with its best known artifacts ranging from the vomitable adaptation of Kerouac's THE SUBTERRANEANS to the comic agenda of A BUCKET OF BLOOD. That's why I was glad to see this jazzy little obscurity turn up on video. Set in Manhattan's Greenwich Village, this improvisational b&w indie by Larry Moyer grafts the world of smoky coffeehouses and stoned deadbeats onto a B-movie crime scenario.

A botched bank robbery jump-starts the cheap thrills, with only one of the crooks escaping with his life, as well as \$90,000 in loot. On the lam and bleeding from a bullet wound, he sneaks onto a Greenwich Village tour bus and is soon taken in by a bunch of local "tea-heads" (including future VANISHING POINT star Barry Newman in one of his first film roles, as head beatnik Mason), who get him a morphine shot for his pain and let him crash out on a handy mattress.

Gruff-voiced Lionel Stander plays the owner of the upstairs coffeehouse, who lets all of the neighborhood bohemians sack out in his basement apartment, in exchange for filling his cafe whenever the yokel tourists pay a visit. While the crime scenario is standard stuff, these unwashed rebels embrace every lovable cliché — they share some "reefer", meet a drug-dealing pharmacist, have a stoned cockroach race, cruise through a beat shindig (which Moyer actually held — and shot — in his own apartment), and attend an art opening only so they can steal the deli platter. Of course, when they need a shower, they do it *en masse* at the swanky home of an elderly art patron ('30s actress Wendy Barrie). Every so often these layabouts remember they've got a murderous, injured felon hiding out in their pad, with each of these anti-social rebels secretly planning to pry the stolen cash from him.

Despite his dirty sweatshirt, Newman looks a bit clean-cut to be a beatnik, but uses his natural charisma and arrogance to



win us over; while *Stander* is always good for a laugh, particularly when the Pigs shut down his coffeehouse. Mixing *PULL MY DAISY* with *THE TREASURE OF SIERRA MADRE*, Moyer (who was named Best Director at the San Francisco Film Fest) captures a crude spontaneity amongst the characters, while cinematographer Max Glenn's hand-held camera adds realism, right down to a wonderfully-cynical San Gennaro Festival climax (where it's obvious the crowd didn't even realize they were in a movie). Sprinkled with tacky Beat performance art, music and all-too-authentic weirdos, this is no classic, but certainly offers a finger-snapping dose of nostalgia on a shoestring budget.

BABY LOVE (VSOM; 1969).

This sleazy slice of British sexploitation meshes a teenage tease, a lustful roster of characters and plenty of hothouse melodrama. A bit more serious than its tawdry US ad campaign would have you believe, freshman director Alastair Reid (*TRAFFIK*, *TALES OF THE CITY*) tries hard to convince us that he's interested in more than simple T&A, and keeps this amusingly overwrought melodrama surprisingly seedy.

Long before steaming up screens in *BLOOD ON SATAN'S CLAW*, 15-year-old Linda Hayden made her screen debut in the title role of luscious, illegitimate schoolgirl Luci. It begins like any cheapjack EuroDreck, when Luci's slut of a Mum commits suicide and she's taken in by one of her mother's old lovers, a wealthy Doctor (Keith Barron), and his wife (Ann Lynn). Living in palatial digs for the first time, the sexually curious girl quickly begins to reek havoc on her uptight new household, while getting even with the Doc for dumping her mother so long ago.

The Doctor's son instantly begins leering at this scantily-dressed new guest (who conveniently leaves the bathroom door cracked open when disrobing), while just about every supporting character has a perpetual hard-on for Luci, including an old fart who gropes her in a movie theatre, a Black dude who makes out with her in a nightclub, and even the Doctor (who might actually be her papa). Oh, and let's not forget his missus, who helps console Luci by sleeping in the same bed with her, with the expected lesbian results.

Sporting see-thru dresses, bikinis and often nothing at all, Hayden makes a naturalistic Lolita, with just the right blend of confusion, innocence and manipulative brattiness. Happily, she's also a far cry from today's anorexic teen sexpots. Meanwhile, the rest of the cast takes it all quite seriously, with Diana Dors briefly turning up in nightmares as Luci's dead mom. Edited by



'60s arthouse crowd, with boho-successes like *KING OF HEARTS* and *LA GUERRE EST FINIE*. No surprise, after she split with Almond in the '70s (for less than astute Hollywood gigs like *EARTHQUAKE* and *MONSIGNOR*), his career went straight into the crapper. She's the *only* reason I didn't shut this off at the midway point.

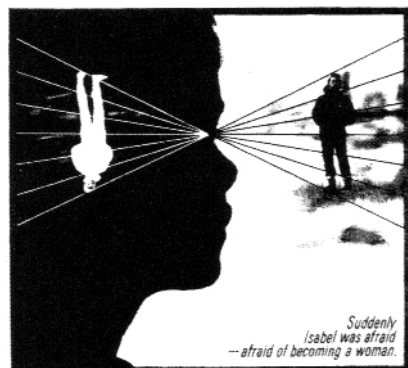
HOW COME NOBODY'S ON OUR SIDE? (1975).

In my 15 years of film-zines, I've reviewed just about every biker movie ever made. I didn't think I could actually despise one of these lovably anti-social flicks — that is, until I encountered this comic offshoot, starring two of the genre's mainstays, Adam Roarke (*HELL'S ANGELS ON WHEELS*, *HELL'S BELLES*) and Larry Bishop (who, besides being Joey's kid, turned up in flicks like *ANGEL UNCHAINED*). 84 minutes have rarely seemed so eternal.

Made in 1972, but released three years later, after the genre had nosedived, Roarke and Bishop are type-cast as, respectively, Person and Brandy, two B-movie actors who're sick of their el cheapo biker movie gigs and boring lives. Stealing two cycles from the set, they split on a much-needed road trip, decked out like their grubby on-camera characters. But first, they make a pit stop for the only good scene in the entire movie, when the unshaven guys scam their way into a theatre that's showing a biker movie double bill which includes *THE SAVAGE SEVEN* (in which both actors *actually* appeared).

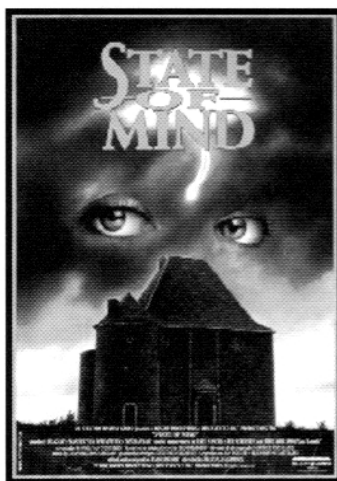
It's all downhill from there, as we join these dullards (who're definitely low a quart in the braincell dept.) on their anemic adventures. Broke and bored, these dimwits tool around California, get their choppers busted up by a half-pint trucker, have *real* bikers laughing at them, and meet up with Alexandra Hay (Jackie Gleason's daughter in *SKIDOO*) as Person's sexy sis, who's smarter than both guys combined. It eventually turns into a full-blown caper movie when the scruffy pair shave off their beards, pose as cops and smuggle grass over the Mexican border (buried in horseshit, mind you). Along the way, a (fully-haired) Rob Reiner turns up as a south-of-the-border dope dealer named Miguelito, with Penny Marshall (who also had a small role in *THE SAVAGE SEVEN*) as his ditty squeeze.

While it's cool to see Roarke and Bishop in top-billed biker roles, the end result goes straight into the shithole after 15 minutes, and the moment they steal a tank, it careens over the insufferably-wacky borderline. Given the on-screen talent, you'd think director Richard Michaels and scripter Leigh Chapman (*DIRTY MARY*, *CRAZY LARRY*) could concoct a more memorable story, but they're even more lost than their actors. Obviously, Roarke and Bishop want to be the Hope & Crosby of grass-smuggling biker-wannabes, but they're actually more insufferable than Lenny & Squiggy. Hard to believe, it makes their previous drive-in fare look like *Palme d'Or* winners.



ISABEL (VSOM; 1968).

There's a common belief that Canadian films are so somber and stark that they're as much fun as watching your icebox defrost. Well, this is precisely the type of early artsy fare that helped forge this long-standing stereotype. Lensed in snowy Quebec and steeped in deep-seated family dysfunction, this chilly psychodrama's lone saving grace is Genevieve Bujold, who takes the title role under the direction of her husband-to-be Paul Almond (who also cast

**STATE OF MIND (1996).**

I admit it. Sometimes I get suckered into an obviously shitty horror flick, simply because of its cast, and this is a prime example. Still, where else will you find a Belgium/French/Netherlands co-production that features both Fred Williamson and Paul Naschy!? Alas, they're never seen together, and their roles are brief (and, believe it or not, beneath even them). In fact, Naschy only turns up in the opening sequence — stripping off his shirt (*ooh la la!*, or considering his age, *oh no no!*) for a sexy shower interlude that leaves him dead in the first two minutes.

But let's get onto its laborious central story, which stars Manouk van der Meulen as Barbara, a middle-aged woman living alone in a remote house, who takes in two survivors (Lisa Gaye & Don Hannah) of a car accident outside her door. She hides these two injured strangers, lies to the police, promises that a Doctor is on the way, and administers her own drugs in the meantime, as this quickly spins into an incredibly boring hostage psychodrama. No surprise, their basketcase of a hostess is awash in old traumas she's able to relive thanks to her new house guests. As the police become increasingly suspicious (due to additional nearby demises), the plot tacks on some corpse-disposing, lesbo bathing, and a final turnabout when brutal Barbara learns that her prisoners have their own share of deadly secrets.

Lest we forget, Williamson pops up from time to time as Loomis, a cheery root-smoking cop who's investigating the crash, with THE STEPFATHER's Jill Schoelen as Hammer's young partner. Fred's role is regrettably limp. Schoelen proves that her acting talent ceased with her teens, but they both outshine their insufferably one-dimensional co-stars (and hopefully got a nice European vacation in exchange for their slumming). Blandly directed by Reginald Adamson (a/k/a Reginald Van Severen), this is an 81-minute embarrassment for everyone involved. Technically threadbare and dramatically leaden, it actually made me long for US horror slop.

THIS IS AMERICA PART II [a.k.a. Jabberwalk II; American Dreamer] (J4HI; 1980).

Back in SC#8, I reviewed Romano Vanderbes's 1977 mondo movie JABBERWALK (a/k/a This is America), a quaintly 'shocking' profile of '70s deviance in the USA. Well, Vanderbes' sequel covers much of the same territory, as a foreign visitor takes a critical look at the weirder niches of American society, with deadpan narration (by Norman Rose) over-analyzing it all. Nowadays, most of its racy subjects seem pretty tame, but its more outrageous sequences are good for some laughs.

Tackling a wide range of coast-to-coast topics, the movie kicks off on a prime note, with Dead Kennedy's lead singer Jello Biafra and his run for mayor of San Francisco. From there on, highlights include a topless car wash, female body builders, the disco phenomenon, a doggie brothel, plus a chubby, self-proclaimed "super hero" named Captain Sticky, who attacks evildoers with peanut butter pies. One of my favorite segments is a hilarious look at the protein value of worm-eating, with an average family at their dinner table, happily slurping down a meal of the wiggy critters and washing it down with a tall glass of fresh worm juice! Yum!

Miami Beach's "curious and sad" senior citizen communities are criticized, as we watch old farts being loaded into ambulances; we visit "The First Church of the Purest Powder", devoted to the spiritual high of coke-snorting; plus we check out a raucous Hell's Angels party, complete with an appear-

ance by Bo Diddley. Still, the flick's best moments involve the deeper recesses of Manhattan, particularly a trip into the subway tunnels in search of "colonies of derelicts" who live in these "dungeons of filth." There's also the wonderful world of the NYC rat, including its predatory mutant strains. All of this fun ends on a particularly somber note, with actual footage from a prison execution, from last meal to electric chair sizzle.

This is essentially a fast-paced parade of freaks and dimwits, plus some subjects where you'd prefer *not* to know the truth (e.g. a visit to a high-tech chicken farm, where the birds' own guano is recycled into the next day's food). It often resembles a precursor to tabloid shows such as HARD COPY, and when we follow a bounty hunter as he beats the bejesus out of a fugitive, its like you're watch the birth of COPS. No surprise, the movie bogs down when covering sex, since topics like erotic bakeries, male strippers and S&M are relatively mainstream nowadays (though it is nostalgic to see Plato's Retreat). Profiling the silliness, the excesses and the grimmer slices of life in the US, Vanderbes has a lovably ax-grinding agenda, and ultimately makes this country look a lot more entertaining than it actually is.

THE PICK-UP (Something Weird Video; 1968).

Director R.L. Frost is best loved for grindhouse deviance such as LOVE CAMP 7 and THE DEFILERS. In this change-of-pace release, he brought that same hard-edged 'roughie' attitude to this b&w crime-romp, along with his usual array of testosterone-fueled males and nekkid dames. He even tossed longtime pals Bob Cresse and David F. Friedman a couple scenery-gnawing supporting roles.

It begins in Las Vegas, long before all of the jazzy, mob-owned casinos were razed to make way for corporate gambling-theme parks. Wesdon Bishop (who also co-wrote the script) and Stefan Zema stars as two dumb-ass bag men for the mob, who pick up a suitcase stuffed with syndicate cash, and are supposed to take it straight to Los Angeles. Half-wits that they are, the pair make a desert pit stop to help out two car-troubled tarts, down a few drinks and rent a couple quikie motel rooms, only to realize (too late) that it's all a sexy scam by these enterprising dames, who steal their car and cash.

It's then that Cresse turns up as a poolside mob-slob named Sal, who's wondering where his money went; while his Las Vegas connection is played by a young, screen-charisma-challenged Friedman, who even gets his own hairy-backed sex scene (which, if you couldn't already guess, ain't pretty). Meanwhile, the desperate-to-save-their-skins Bishop & Zema trail these gals back to their home and abuse them until they divulge where the stolen cash went (complete with a makeshift nipple-electrocution highlight). Plus, there's always time for some gratuitous lesbian action, with a sweaty mobster playing voyeur. Ahh, they don't make love stories like they used to.

With its B-movie storyline driven by all of the best desires — sex, greed, betrayal, and survival — plus a wonderfully amoral epilogue, this is a nice breather from the usual Deuce maggot-flogging fare, which piled on the sex, but with barely a script. If you're already a fan of R.L.'s over-the-top outings, you know they can get pretty harsh at times, and this is no exception. It's a tough 'n' sleazy noir, aided by Frost's crisp photography, perfectly overblown performances, sudden plot twists, plenty of female nudity, and guys who leave their socks on.

I'LL NEVER FORGET WHAT'S 'IS NAME (Anchor Bay; 1967).

Let's set the Way Back Machine for the good ol' days of the late '60s — back when money was the root of all evil, when personal freedom was the primary goal in life, and when UK director Michael Winner made genuinely original movies like THE GIRL-GETTERS, THE JOKERS and this colorful, subversive romp. With top-billed Oliver Reed in one of his wackier roles, this Mod mid-life-comedy has you hooked in the opening minutes, with Reed lugging an ax through the streets of London, entering his high-rise workplace and casually chopping his desk into kindling.

Reed stars as successful advertising director Andrew Quint, who's sick of the corporate rat race

**Las Vegas...a thousand hotels...
3000 showgirls...10,000 pleasures...
and a million ways to die!**



and his empty life (which is spent boffing an assortment of pretty young things, including Marianne Faithful as one of his ditzier conquests). Currently separated from his wife and young daughter, and crashing with pal Edward Fox, he suddenly becomes a thirtysomething rebel by ditching his whole 'dishonest' existence in favor of episodic misadventures (which often don't make a lick of sense).

When he's not being beaten up by old school chums, Quint's first route of escape is taking a job at a small but respected literary magazine, while befriending secretary Georgina (POOR COW's Carol White, in her first film), a virgin who reluctantly falls for this perpetual badboy and (for a rare moment) exposes his humanity. He's also busy fending off top-billed Orson Welles as Quint's girthful old advertising boss, who'll literally do *anything* to get this wunderkind back; popping up every so often with some sleazy ploy that proves everything has its price.

While much of the film is a mixed bag of stylish but sledgehammer scenarios, Winner really pulls it together in the final reel, as tragedy, cynicism and greed take turns kicking Quint in the balls, and his retort is his creation of the Ultimate Commercial — a hilarious compendium of anti-product diatribe, his shrewish women, surreal camera-tricks, plus holocaust and A-bomb footage. Co-starring Harry Andrews and Frank Finlay, and written by THE GIRL-GETTERS scribe Peter Draper, this often lays a dramatic goose-egg, but it's also a fascinating chunk of nostalgia. Briskly edited and wildly structured (with excellent use of jump cuts), it captures the free-spirit of the times, if not its depth. Thank goodness for the late Reed, who (no surprise) makes a fine, self-absorbed womanizer, with the film running 'til empty on his unpredictable, anti-social charms.

[Note: Anchor Bay's DVD contains a witty and informative audio commentary by Michael Winner, who recalls as much about his cast's offscreen antics as the making of the movie, as well as his use of friends' apartments, Fellini-esque dream sequences, how one scene of implied fellatio got the film banned by the Catholic Legion of Decency, and repeatedly drones on about how fashionable the clothing was.]

THE ZEBRA KILLER [a.k.a. Panic City] (Shocking Videos; 1974).

Directed and written by William Girdler, who cranked out a slew of grindhouse faves and stinkers (ABBY, THREE ON A MEATHOOK) before his untimely death, this urban thriller is crude, violent, lovably vile, and the type of flick I wish I could've first enjoyed in an old 42nd Street grindhouse. Mixing the basic framework of a cat-and-mouse policier with the grubby trappings of then-hot blaxploitation fare, it pits a heroic Black cop (Austin Stoker of ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13 fame) against an afro'ed, kill-crazed psychopath.

Stoker stars as overworked (but ever-dapper) police sergeant Frank Savage, who's investigating the murder of three young women, with the only clue being a bizarre, handwritten note promising "One down, 13 to go." Yes, a sicko is on the loose, and it's impossible not to cheer for the loony after he *blows up* an entire happy family (including little kids!) while they sit in their station wagon. As more victims turn up, with similar notes, the suspect is described as a black man — but the viewer figures out pretty quickly that he's really a big, dumb white madman in black-face.

Teamed with his white-bread partner (Hugh Smith), Savage hits the streets, and when he's not searching for this murderer, he breaks up some pissed-off whores who're beating up their pathetic pimp (D'Urville Martin, in a cornea-singeing ensemble!) and stops a cop-killer sniper. But when our central creep kidnaps Savage's girlfriend (Valery Rogers), it becomes personal; as this sniveling villain exposes the real agenda behind his seemingly-random madness, amidst rambling racist monologues and taunts to Savage (even going so far as to sit next to the cop in a barroom, without being recognized).

Stoker makes a terrific bad-ass good-guy, as he pisses off authorities, sports Hammer hand-me-downs, and gets crazier by the minute thanks to this killer's mindgames. Meanwhile, Girdler certainly knows how to keep his

**He smashed
up his desk...
gave up a wife,
three mistresses
and went back to
the simple life.**

**Then his troubles
really started!**



ORSON WELLES • OLIVER REED • CAROL WHITE • HARRY ANDREWS
STAR OF POOR COW

in a Michael Winner Film of "I'LL NEVER FORGET WHAT'S 'ISNAME"

with Michael Hordern and Frank Finlay • Music by Francis Lai

Written by Peter Draper • Directed by Michael Winner • A Scimitar Films Production

(undoubtedly drunk or stoned) audience awake by piling on the cheap thrills, as this toothy Jolson-psycho pushes a janitress down a flight of stairs, tosses a guy down an elevator shaft, and even locates Savage in his cross-hairs. There's also plenty of laughably accidental carnage, since every time Savage barely escapes death, some unlucky bystander gets offed instead! Yes, it's unsubtle, under-financed rotgut, which looks like shit and blows its wad early on, before degenerating into a standard chase; but its ballsy, anything-goes sensibilities continually makes up for its shortcomings.

THE JAZZ SINGER (1959).

Samson Raphaelson's grizzled story of a cantor and his wayward showbiz son has been brought to the big-screen by Al Jolson, Danny Thomas and even Neil Diamond. If you thought the later was the most embarrassing incarnation, guess again. As part of the "Lincoln Mercury Startime Hour," this hoary old tale also received a solemnly misguided TV-treatment with ever-egomaniacal Jerry Lewis in the lead. Broadcast on October 13, 1959, Jerry displays every painful ounce of his dramatic (and musical) potential, while sweating more than a 300-pound guy locked in a car trunk. 40 years after its debut, the thing is barely remembered, and for good reason.

Jer stars as nightclub-headliner Joey Robin, who keeps his audience in stitches with the usual song 'n' schtick. But hiding under his hard-edged stage-banter, he carries a family trauma. You see, as a child, his cantor father (Eduard Franz) taught li'l Joey Rabinowitz to sing for their God, only to declare "I have no son," when his kid grew up, changed his name and began warbling tunes like "Making Whoopee" on-stage. As guest bombshell, there's shapely Anna Maria Alberghetti (Jerry's future co-star in CINDERELLA), playing TV-starlet Ginny Gibson, who tries to lure Joey into the big time. Still, Mama (Yiddish-theatre star Molly Picon) wants the family back together, and when Joey returns on his papa's birthday, all sorts of dramatic shit busts loose.

Thankfully, this saccharine family-redemption and Jerry's ill-advised theatrics is crammed into only an hour (amidst commercials for the latest autos). And as any hardcore Lewis fan knows, when left to his own personal agenda, Jer usually confuses heartfelt with half-assed. The finale, as Joey has to choose between Deathbed Papa and TV-stardom (in the midst of singing "Be a Clown") is particularly putrid, with Lewis ultimately performing the synagogue's 'Kol Nidre' in clown make-up. Wow! What a steaming pile!

Co-starring Alan Reed (the voice of Fred Flintstone) as Uncle Nat, and generically-directed by TV-pioneer Ralph Nelson (who later helmed equally touching dramas, like EMBRYO), the production values are minimal, as is its long-past-its-expiration-date melodrama. Of course, that doesn't stop our ego-fueled Lewis, who (only three years after breaking up with Dean) takes it all so seriously that his emoting is thicker than the grease in his hair. Well-intentioned but excruciating, this roadbump in Jerry's career is only fit for his most hardcore, masochistic fans (like me).

JERRY LEWIS
The man of many talents! The versatile Mr. Lewis makes you laugh... makes you cry... brings you wonderful moments of music in

"THE JAZZ SINGER"
WITH
EDUARD FRANZ, MOLLY PICON, ALAN REED
AND SPECIAL GUEST STAR
ANNA MARIA ALBERGHETTI
ON
LINCOLN-MERCURY STARTIME
TV'S FINEST HOUR
9:30 NBC 4

A QUARTET OF U.K. GHOST FILMS

1999 was a banner year for US-lensed ghost movies, what with *THE SIXTH SENSE* unexpectedly rocketing onto the box-office charts, as well as studio flicks such as *THE HAUNTING*, *STIR OF ECHOES*, *THE HOUSE ON HAUNTED HILL*, et cetera. Still, some of the most fascinating ghost films I've seen in the past few months are these four extremely-varied, low-budget UK-releases that are barely available in the US.

One of the newest and most involving ghost stories out of the UK is the simply-titled, but scaldingly-acted **URBAN GHOST STORY** (1998), a Scottish-lensed supernatural yarn that re-energizes the usual spiritual shenanigans with its tightly-wound direction and well-shaded characters. Unlike Hollywood ghost movies, its story is steeped in a welcome, low-key realism — grounding its more fantastic moments in the type of drab, working-class milieu that's more akin to the early work of Mike Leigh and Ken Loach.

Heather Ann Foster stars as a troubled 12-year-old named Lizzie, who's still traumatized from a near-death experience caused by an Ecstasy-fueled joyride/car-crash that killed her best friend. Living in a shithole Glasgow apartment with her mom (Stephanie Buttle) and li'l brother, she suddenly experiences strange noises and shifting furniture. As the disturbances get worse and begin terrorizing the family in the night, the only person who'll listen is a skeptical tabloid reporter (Jason Connery) who ends up publishing a series of lurid stories (with secret plans to eventually expose it all as a fake). Soon he's hauling intrusive paranormal investigators and their equipment into their flat, plus a hokey spiritualist who diagnoses Lizzie with demonic possession — all of which only make matters worse.

Much more than just a ghost story, the freshman effort by 27-year-old director Genevieve Jolliffe is a thoroughly engrossing, character-driven tale of a family that's being torn apart by everyday forces, in addition to these unexplained occurrences and media manipulation. All of the actors are tremendously naturalistic, particularly Foster in her film debut, and it's startling to see this kind of nuanced performance in a genre effort. Lizzie is no saint by any means, and her day-to-day life is almost as harrowing as her ghostly trouble, what with the press labeling her the "Ecstasy Girl", a girlfriend nearly OD'ing, and her life threatened by thugs because of unpaid rent. Offering few solid answers, this is a bleak yet touching gem that twists the usual ghost tale stereotypes into a blistering psychological drama.

With *THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT* establishing the allure (and occasional annoyance) of faux-documentaries, I'm surprised that more people haven't mentioned the infamous BBC production **GHOSTWATCH** (1992). Broadcast in the UK on Halloween night 1992, its airing became an embarrassment to the BBC after a number of complaints and rampant tabloid rumors of post-show suicides and psychiatric help. No surprise, it's still fondly remembered by those lucky enough to catch its one and only telecast.

Using a format loosely based on a successful real-crime show called *CRIMEWATCH*, this 90-minute investigation into the supernatural is framed like any call-in/chat show and is glibly described as a "wild ghost hunt." Its centerpiece is a live feed to an honest-to-goodness haunted house, with BBC trucks taking over a calm neighborhood, interviewing the weary family which still resides in the home, and a team of skeptical reporters planning to stay the night — with video cameras in every room ready capture any loose spectre. But its most inspired move is in the casting, with respected talk show host Michael Parkinson (playing himself) as the moderator, and well-known TV-Lite celebs like Sarah Greene (who was currently hosting a children's show, *GOING LIVE!*) and Craig Charles (*RED DWARF*) providing the often-joke coverage from the spooky locale and (initially) treating it like a silly lark for the whole family.

The basic idea is so simple, yet pulled off beautifully — beginning with a purposely inane first-half which includes calls from concerned viewers, "live" technical glitches and bickering experts, and while the family is obviously shaken by their recent ordeals, no one really takes them seriously. But slowly, the creeps increase, as the youngest child describes a poltergeist named "Pipes", scratches spontaneously appear on the older sister, there are mysterious stains and noises, and there's definitely something residing in their boarded up glory hole. Then there are the callers to the studio, who provide horrific information about the house's previous tenants and what exactly might be under their stairs.

Suddenly, the program isn't so funny anymore. In fact, it's becoming downright dangerous to everyone inside the house.

I'm not sure how this mock-program was advertised to the public, but I can definitely imagine younger viewers scared shitless by this "live" event (since there are no disclaimers to break the mood). Director Lesley Manning and writer Stephen Volk (*GOTHIC*) make efficient use of their middling BBC budget, and while they overlay their hand during the hokey climax, this is a delightful romp boasting several ingenious stretches and truly unsettling moments.

These last two doses of ghostly thrills were also made for British-TV, but with always-reliable Quatermass-creator Nigel Kneale penning their scripts, the results are uniquely intriguing. Let's begin with **THE STONE TAPE** (1972), a

BBC effort that was telecast on Christmas Day 1972, and despite its cheesy shot-on-video veneer, proved that Kneale understood how to spin a crack-jack little yarn and push an audience's buttons.

At a long-abandoned estate, the employees of Ryan Electronics have set up a secret, high-tech lab where they're working on a revolutionary new recording system which (in this pre-CD storyline) will put an end to the notion of 'tape'. During renovations in the basement, they discover an old WWII storeroom and long-hidden relics, while local residents offer up a grim history of the place, including unexplained deaths, an 1890's exorcism, and a man who went mad after sneaking into this creepy basement when he was just a boy.

Jane Asher stars as skittish computer programmer Jill Greeley, who's the first person to encounter a ghost, in the form of a shrieking, long-deceased maid. But when their skeptical boss Peter Brock (Michael Bryant) also witnesses it, he decides to use their (then cutting edge) equipment to record the spectre and analyze the data with their super-computer. So as Jill makes an emotional connection with this terrified spirit and is on the verge of a breakdown, Peter becomes obsessed with making a breakthrough. Or will these experiments only unleash a greater, long-dead danger? The film's title refers to a theory that the actual stones which make

up the basement may have somehow recorded these terrifying events (not unlike a tape), with certain vibrations bringing them back to life.

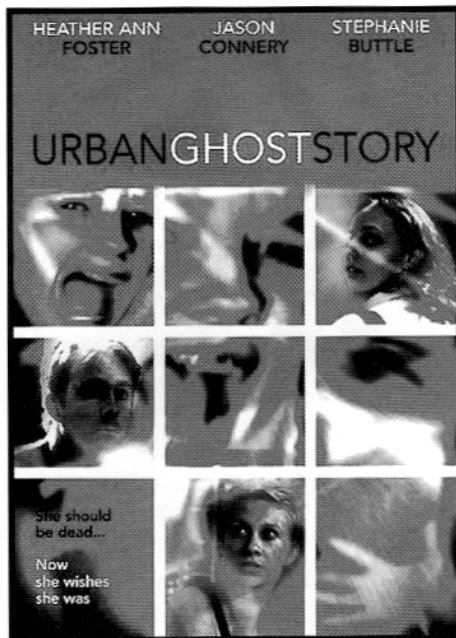
Sure, it's difficult not to laugh at some of the ultra-lame FX (particularly during the finale), and the direction by Peter Sasdy (*THE DEVIL WITHIN HER*) is pedestrian. Yet despite its antiquated technology and production values that would make most US soap operas look like *THE PHANTOM MENACE*, Kneale sneaks in some fascinating ideas amidst his typically imaginative plot twists.

A more traditional, but equally compelling ghost story was **THE WOMAN IN BLACK**, which had its UK premiere on Xmas Eve 1989. Based on a book by Susan Hill and adapted by Nigel Kneale, while *THE STONE TAPE* tried to rethink the ghost story for a modern age (and on a dime-store budget), this highly-atmospheric period piece revels in decidedly old-fashioned chills.

Set in '20s England, Adrian Rawlins stars as Arthur Kidd, a young solicitor who's handed an important assignment by his bosses, to take a week-long trip to a small coastal town in order to organize a deceased client's estate. Once there, everyone in this village seems to have had an eerie aversion to the recently dead woman, and Kidd is one of the only mourners at her funeral — not counting a mysterious black-garbed lady (Pauline Moran) who remains at a distance. Visiting the client's isolated, marsh-surrounded house, Kidd begins to understand what crept out the locals, as he hears the terrifying sound of a carriage accident and screams ripping through the thick mist. Still, his curiosity overwhelms any fear, and he decides to stay the night, in hopes of uncovering the house's secrets.

It's not until an hour in that the suspense really tightens, as Kidd becomes freaked out by these repeated screams, a child's voice in an abandoned nursery, a pesky toy soldier which continually turns up, as well as the return of this increasingly-nightmarish woman in black. In the process, Kidd experiences fever dreams and nearly goes mad in his quest to rid himself of this horror — which even threatens to follow him back home.

Although the story never breaks any new ground, director Herbert Wise (I, *CLAUDIUS*) does a fine job capturing the bleak countryside and methodically building tension. Along with a capable cast, Rawlins is particularly sympathetic as an ordinary man whose life spins out of his control. The result is a slight but effectively spun yarn, with a wonderfully melancholy denouement.





HORROR HOTEL [a.k.a. City of the Dead] (Englewood; 1960).

This moody little UK horrorrama didn't arrive in the US until '63, and when it did, was advertised like any other lurid, cut-rate programmer. Most of the time, these films suck, but in this instance audiences were rewarded with a surprisingly atmospheric, dead-serious Gothic thriller. Directed by first-timer John Moxey (who later moved onto TV-hits like *MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE* and *THE AVENGERS*), he pumps up the atmospheric backdrop, complete with a town that's perpetually in heavy, portentous shadow — indoor and out, day or night.

Following a 17th century witch-burning intro, we skip to the present day, with pretty blonde co-ed Nan Barlow (Venetia Stevenson) studying this puritanical period of US history (with 2nd-billed Christopher Lee as her college professor). For her latest paper, she plans a two-week vacation to the New England town

of Whitewood, to investigate the legend of an undead witch who returned from her crispy fate in order to kill off her accusers. After renting a room at the creepy old Ravenswood Inn (conveniently located next door to the cemetery), every signal tells her to leap back into her car and run, but if she did, there wouldn't be a movie. Instead, the mist is never less than ankle-deep, the town's priest declares the place evil, odd noises are heard beneath the trap door in her room. And if Nan isn't paranoid enough, that black-robed religious congregation in the graveyard is sure to push her over the edge.

But at midpoint, the script takes a radical turn as others enter the picture, including Nan's concerned boyfriend (Tom Naylor) and brother (Dennis Lotis), as well as the priest's comely granddaughter (Betta St. John). Meanwhile, Chris Lee's prof takes on more nefarious shadings, all connected to the town coven's annual ceremonies. Unfortunately, with the exception of Lee, the acting is a disgrace, but the film is so cleverly lensed and well-spun that it's forgivable. The script by George Baxt (*BURN, WITCH, BURN*) and Amicus-honcho Milton Subotsky takes some clunky turns, but still generates plenty of simple, old-fashioned suspense, amidst ghostly hitchhikers, cut-rate hallucinations, an excellent witch-bursting-into-flame finale, and some unexpected twists. Justifiably brief (76 minutes), this is a wondrously gloomy, low-budget surprise.

IDIOD BOX (Shocking Videos; 1996).

This cool Australian flick never had a release in the States, probably because you can't summarize its plot in 20 words or less (thus making it impossible to market in the US). Director-writer David Caesar starts his film like any slacker portrait, but here we've got down-under deadbeats who lack any form of charisma. When they're not stealing charity baskets for a quick thrill (and afterward, while counting their take, complain that "people are stingy"), the script takes off in unpredictable directions and character development.

Ben Mendelsohn and Jeremy Sims star as 20-ish drunken buds, Kev and Mick,

who spend their time vegetating to the TV, and still live with their families. Broke, jobless, aimless, pissed-off, and constantly in search of cheap brew, Mick hits on a Polynesian chick who runs the local beer stand, while Kev (the more self-destructive and stupider of the two) has a plan to illegally fatten their wallets. How about robbing a bank? Yeah, *that's* a bright idea! No surprise, this criminal endeavor is as half-assed as their lives, leading to hilariously-unplanned results.

What they don't realize is that a series of clown-masked bank robberies have been occurring around the city (in an unexpectedly touching turn, perpetrated by a guy who's struggling to maintain his junkie-wife's habit). So while these terminally unlucky bastards recruit strangers and set up their big crime, the police have their chosen bank (the only one the crook hasn't yet hit) under heavy surveillance. Though their freshman foray in crime is pathetic, the script finds ways to twist it into blissfully unexpected directions.

Ingratiously-structured and only 82-minutes long, just imagine if Kevin Smith actually had a clue about how to direct a tightly-wound movie. Accompanied by a soundtrack of Aussie bands, Mendelsohn (who co-starred in Geoffrey Wright's caustic *METAL SKIN*) is thoroughly compelling as the volatile Kev, who's willing to shoot or kick-the-shit-out-of anything that gets on his nerves. Meanwhile, Caesar's insightful eye and his roster of original characters make you understand how this tract-home landscape and dead-end life can easily lead to these types of misadventures.

THE DAY THE FISH CAME OUT (1967).

Director Michael Cacoyannis first made waves in the early-'60s with his award-winning *ZORBA THE GREEK*. But one can only wonder what type of delayed drug seizure caused this wrongheaded nuclear black-comedy. I remember trying to watch this flick when I was a pre-teen, and even then, I realized it sucked on a grande scale. At least director-producer-writer Cacoyannis had the good sense to start it off with typically-trippy Maurice Binder opening credits. From there on, it's a mind-boggling mess.

The "Who greenlighted this shit?" plot begins when a military plane (on a secret mission) takes a watery nose-dive near an insignificant Greek island and jettisons their highly-radioactive cargo into the drink. Oops! The usually respectable Tom Courtenay (*BILLY LIAR*) and Colin Blakely star as the crew, who swim to safety and end up stumbling about the rocky island in only their damp underpants. Enter Sam Wanamaker as the commander of the clandestine rescue mission, which poses as a bunch of "colorful" tourists who want to open a hotel on this desolate rock. In reality, their primary concern is locating the highly-dangerous "Container Q" — unaware that it's been found by an idiot goat-herder, who's trying to open up the deadly box with an ax! Unfortunately, this government infiltration of fake 'hotel builders' inadvertently turns this sleepy island into an instant tourist trap, which only adds to the absurdity.

For (hetero)sex-appeal, 21-year-old Candice Bergen co-stars in the 'pre-credible' role of Electra Brown, an in-heat archaeologist's assistant who sports

an eye-popping array of hip boots, hot pants, skimpy tops, and ultra-chic Barbarella-wear. Hey, at least Candice has had her fair share of comparable bombs, like *OLIVER'S STORY*; meanwhile multi-award-winning Courtenay looks like he plans on disemboweling his agent for spending most of the movie in a dirty white speedo. Amidst dull spies, dim-witted villagers, and those two starving morons in their undies, it transforms into a nuke-fueled beach-party fiasco when this island peasant finally busts into "Q", dumps it into the sea and poisons the village's water supply — with all of the fish dying (hence the title) and the populace partying toward a big, underwhelming finale. No question, it sucks!

Numbingly misguided, you get the feeling Cacoyannis watched *DR. STRANGE-LOVE* one too many times while stoned and mistook himself for a Greek Kubrick. In truth, he's more like a Greek Joel Schumacher, what with all of the scantily-clad leads and pretty boys in faggy garb (not to mention, he was also the costume designer!). In fact, the mostly-shirtless government search team looks more like a gay porn casting call. No matter what the inspiration, this is a colorful yet teeth-grinding chunk of late-'60s cinemanure.





UPTIGHT (VSoM; 1968) and IF HE HOLLERS, LET HIM GO [a.k.a. Dead Right] (1968).

Over the years, SC has reviewed almost every blaxploitation flick of the '70s, and it's about time we dug up this 1968 duet, which helped lay the groundwork for the future onslaught of Black Action fare. Released only months apart, they also showcased the talents of Raymond St. Jacques, whose distinctively-baritone career first came to the attention of TV-audiences in the '65 show *RAWHIDE*, followed by films that ranged from the acclaimed *THE PAWNBROKER* to the gloriously misguided *CHANGE OF MIND*.

On its surface, *UPTIGHT* seems like an odd mix of subjects and talents. Besides starring some of the finest black actors of the '60s, its script is based on Liam O'Flaherty's *The Informer* (earlier turned into a 1935 John Ford film), with its original Irish backdrop changed to Cleveland. Then the directorial reigns were handed to Jules Dassin, best known for tony arthouse hits like *NEVER ON SUNDAY*, who tries (and more often fails) to give his material the urban grit of his earliest successes, such as *NAKED CITY*.

Set four days after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., with emotions at a boil, a trio of Black Militant pals (led by future star of *THE MACK*, Max Julien, as Johnny) rob a munitions plant and kill an ancient honky security guard in the process. Julian Mayfield plays a slow-witted lug named Tank, who was too drunk to join his buds for the heist, and because of his unreliability, is tossed out of the local chapter of violent Black Revolutionaries (led by stoic St. Jacques). Roscoe Lee Browne co-stars as a "faggot" police informer nicknamed Daisy-Girl, who convinces Tank to rat out his murderous pal Johnny and collect the \$1000 reward — with his secret snitch leading to a drunken binge that takes this low-IQ'd Judas from barrooms to Jesus freaks to a bunch of rich Whiteys (who're freaked out by Tank's wild tales of Black insurrection). In supporting roles, there's Ruby Dee (who also co-scripted) as Tank's welfare-whore girlfriend.

Heavy on talk and low on action, this is a well-intentioned but dour dose of urban revolt and personal betrayal. Its biggest problem is the out-of-his-league Mayfield, whose guilt-racked hysterics are more grating than dramatic, while Dassin's often obtrusive over-stylization (POV shots, artificial backdrops) continually undercut the material. Still, it has a solid supporting cast, a bluesy minimalist score by Booker T and the MG's, plus some always-timely Kill-Whitey rhetoric. In return, the studio basically dumped the movie — in NYC it premiered it on a double-bill with the Jackie Gleason LSD-comedy *SKIDOO*.

While *UPTIGHT* had its fair share of

(failed) ambitions, *IF HE HOLLERS, LET HIM GO* is lovably unapologetic exploitation. "Borrowing" its title (but unfortunately, not its story) from Chester Himes' groundbreaking 1945 novel, this is a Smart-Black-Man-Against-Every-Racist-White-Shithead-Within-Spitting-Distance yarn, with Raymond St. Jacques bringing a surprising heft to this violently trashy tale.

After escaping from a Southern prison in the opening moments, convicted killer James Lake (St. Jacques) encounters car-troubled Kevin McCarthy, and as if this fleeing con didn't have enough problems, he's soon suckered into a convoluted scheme to kill McCarthy's wife (Dana Wynter). If he refuses, it's a one-way trip back to the slammer. Of course, by now the audience has figured out that the comparatively level-headed Lake is undoubtedly innocent of his original crime, so the guy now finds himself at a moral crossroad — kill someone in order to save himself, or go back to jail on his old false charge. In flashbacks, we also learn how Lake wound up in jail, beginning with an encounter with singer Barbara McNair, who doesn't have to stretch her acting skills (thank goodness) as a nightclub singer who falls for the guy and sheds her clothes for a brief nude love scene. Unfortunately, that's exactly when Lake gets wrongfully arrested for the rape-murder of a jungle-fevered white slut (future *DAYS OF OUR LIVES* diva Susan Seaforth) and convicted by an all-White jury who look like outcasts from a Ma & Pa Kettle movie.

Director Charles Martin pumps up the increasingly clunky drama with plenty of balls-out racism and amusing plot complications — mixing past and present, complete with psychedelic segues — with Lake eventually running for his life and hauling along McCarthy and Wynter for the eye-opening ride. St. Jacques' innate charisma and intelligence holds together the movie, sleazy McCarthy is a 200-pound ham in the shape of a human being, while lynch-happy redneck support comes from Royal Dano as the victim's papa, thick-necked Steve Sandor (*BONNIE'S KIDS*), lawyer Arthur O'Connell, and Ann Prentiss (Paula's younger sis). It all adds up to cheap yet enjoyable slop, which barrels along at a good clip.

OF FREAKS AND MEN [Pro Urodov I Lyudej] (Shocking Videos; 1998).

Here's a one-of-a-kind cinematic oddity — a Soviet-made, experimental period-drama, obviously filmed on a budget, but with subversion and talent to spare. Lemme put it this way, think Guy Maddin meets Eisenstein, as filtered through a Dark Brothers movie. Or perhaps a pre-WWII Russian *BOOGIE NIGHTS*? Yes, it boggles the mind, and so will this overwrought, oversexed and deliriously overstyled visual feast from director-writer Alexei Balabanov.

Beginning like a silent-film (befitting the story's time period) and soon shifting to Sepia-toned sound, were introduced to an array of St. Petersburg characters. There's Dr. Stasov and his adopted Siamese twins, Kolya and Tolya; Engineer Radlov and his comely daughter Liza (Dinara Drukarova); plus Johann (Serge Makovetsky), who's destined to become the cold and casual-homicidal kingpin behind Russia's early pornographic industry.

The storyline initially bounces from one thread to another, with seemingly-little connection, but Balabanov begins to tighten the noose when one of Johann's cruel filth-peddlers, Viktor (Viktor Sukhorukov) becomes intrigued by Stasov's conjoined "freaks", and begins photographing these young boys in the nude. Plus, when Radlov dies, and leaves his home (including Liza) to

longtime housekeeper Grunya — the secret-sister of Johann — this sleaze-merchant quickly insinuates himself into the household. And let's not forget Johann's photographer, who's busy courting Liza. Full of outrageous dramatic turns (from forcing a blind woman into a spanking movie, to the freaks' unexpected acceptance into high-class society), this small film paints an epic portrait of humankind's aberrant desires. Yet while its subject matter is the stuff of exploitation, the tightly-structured filmmaking and storytelling shifts it into an altogether new realm.

A uniquely-cinematic tableau of fetishes, carnality and cruelty, this embraces perverse turn-ons which are rarely touched upon in US fare, but does so with an over-the-top, almost hypnotic artistry. Of course, in spinning his intricate story, Balabanov provides loving recreations of what was once considered scandalous pornography. Technically superb on every level, with expert cinematography by Sergei Astakhov, this might not be the most lighthearted romp, but it's beautifully crafted, deliriously twisted and altogether fascinating.



NASHVILLE GIRL [a.k.a. *New Girl in Town*] (1977).

Directed by Gus Trikonis (best known for barely viewable drive-in slop like *MOONSHINE COUNTY EXPRESS*), this New World production is a standard showbiz melodrama with a country-western twist. But it also flashes its agenda in the opening moments, as our nubile Nashville Girl skinny dips under the credits and promptly gets raped by a horny Jethro Bodine-clone.

Fresh-faced Monica Gayle (*SWITCHBLADE SISTERS*, *STRAWBERRIES NEED RAIN*) stars as teenaged Jamie Barker, who runs away from her abusive rural home with guitar in hand, hitches a ride to Nashville, and plans to be a singing sensation. Of course, she's given the cold shoulder by every record producer, since she doesn't yet realize that you have to *give* in order to *get*. That all changes after her initially-innocent gig as a massage-parlor receptionist, which soon leads to whoring and a stint at a juvenile detention farm. From then on, Jamie leaps into bed with every influential record exec in her path. It's then she meets Glenn Corbett as family-friendly C&W superstar Jeb Hubbard, who's actually a horny ol' dog with a hankering for young'uns — and boy, does sweet li'l Jamie fit the bill. Taking her under his wing and changing her name to Melody Mason, she becomes an instant superstar, with the storyline turning increasing insipid as her out-of-control ego blows a gasket.

This is lightweight sleaze lacking any real surprises, with Trikonis dishing out every imaginable Deep South stereotype, including dip-shit sheriffs, good ol' boy truckers, dyke prison guards, and a fair share of redneck revenge. Unfortunately, he also grinds everything to a halt for the occasional country tune. Gayle (who we'd love to interview for SC, if only we could locate her — director Jack Hill actually told us she was *dead*) is cute and charismatic, though a bit ripe to be playing 16-year-old jailbait. In supporting roles you've got (semi)famed singer Johnny Rodriguez playing himself in the recording studio, and Maytag-pitchman Jesse White as a sleazy music publisher.

All she wanted
was a break.
All they wanted
was her body.



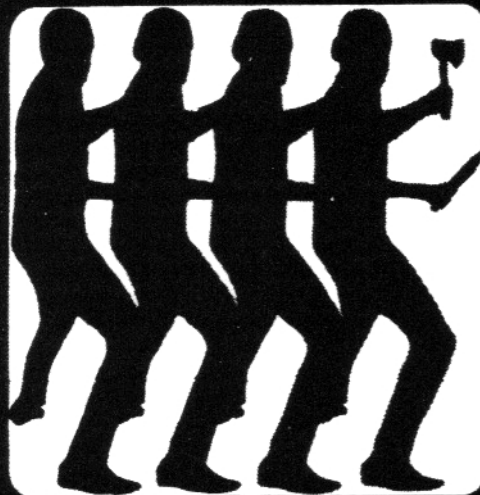
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BRIGADE DES MOEURS [*Vice Squad*] (*Shocking Videos*; 1985).

I often steer clear of movies that lack English dialogue or subtitles, but I gave this hard-boiled, low-brow, and impossible to decipher cop drama a chance after watching its opening minutes. How can *anyone* resist a bunch of topless whores, luring in johns in a city park, who're suddenly chased by masked motorcyclists and blasted to smithereens with pump shotguns?

From what I could tell, this chronicles the activities of a police sex 'n' drugs squad, out to bust anyone having an illegal good time. Presently, their primary concern are these murderous cyclists, which has them raiding a strip club, rousting local pornographers, and doing whatever it takes to make the city safe. Meanwhile, streetwalkers are casually beaten, heroin is trafficked 'round the city, and a barroom full of people are massacred by these motorcycle assassins. In their quest for the truth, you've gotta love how these 'Dirty Henri' cops torture a brain-fried junkie by promising to shove a needle full of heroin into his neck. Of course, the sadistic thugs are even worse (and therefore, more entertaining), as they promise to rip up a woman's crotch with a broken liquor bottle, and finally take the Inspector's girlfriend hostage and threaten her with steaming acid. Best of all is its ending, as the motor-psycho leader takes out his frustrations on the cops — with a knife straight into one's eye and a meat cleaver into another's skull, leading to a vigilante-esque finale.

Starring Thierry de Carbonnieres, Jean-Marc Maurel and Bernard Rosselli; even without the aid of subtitles, this looks like a mindless policier that cloaks its sleaziness within a morally-grounded cop scenario. Oh, but it won't fool anyone! This is unapologetic trash, with director Max Pecas making any excuse to include more naked flesh, from sex clubs and lesbo photography, to a high society orgy. Speaking of alluring events, Brigitte Lahaie even turns up briefly (under the name Brigitte Simonin) as a sexy supporting cop who gets shot in the gut.



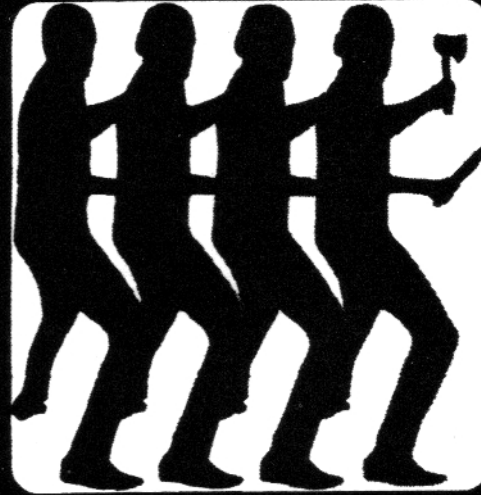
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SHOCK CINEMA talk with '70s B-Movie Starlet

MARILYN JOI

By CHRIS POGGIALI

Although she's best remembered for playing Cleopatra Schwartz in *KENTUCKY FRIED MOVIE*, most SC readers will recognize Marilyn Joi from her impressive list of B-movie credits, which includes no less than seven films by the late, great Al Adamson. Alternately billed as Ineda King, Tracy King, Tracy-Ann King, and T. A. King, Ms. Joi was a dancer who moved with ease from blaxploitation (*THE CANDY TANGERINE MAN*, *BLACK STARLET*) and sexploitation (*C.O.D.*, *THE HAPPY HOOKER GOES TO WASHINGTON*) to science-fiction (*GALAXINA*) and horror (*MANSSION OF THE DOOMED*), and was the only '70s drive-in starlet to appear in nurse movies (*TENDER LOVING CARE*, *NURSE SHERRI*), stewardess movies (*NAUGHTY STEWARDESSES*, *BLAZING STEWARDESSES*), and a cheerleader flick (*CHEERLEADERS' WILD WEEKEND*). She fought Pam Grier in *COFFY*, had phone sex with Bernie Casey in *HIT MAN*, and tore off a man's testicles with her bare hands in *ILSA, HAREM KEEPER OF THE OIL SHEIKS*. *Players* magazine named her "America's Favorite Black Poster Girl" in 1980, and one of "America's 10 Sexiest Black Women" two years later. We caught up with Ms. Joi this past December, and she was nice enough to spend some time talking about her career for this SHOCK CINEMA exclusive.

SC: At what point did you realize that you wanted to become an actress?

Joi: It just sort of fell on me, really. I was dancing, and someone came into the club and asked me, "Do you want to be in a movie?" I was like, "Yeah, right, sure!" (Laughs) That was Al Adamson, and he wanted me to do a dance [in the Fred Williamson movie *HAMMER*] with Vonetta McGee.

SC: You were known as Tracy King back then.

Joi: I was Tracy King until I got drafted — then I became Tracy-Ann King! (Laughs) Something that sounded a little more feminine, y'know? I had been using it for dancing anyway. If you're dancing and you've been out for two years or so, then you've done the circuit and people won't bring you back so quickly — so if you want more bookings, you change your name, change your hair color, get a whole new wardrobe, and go back out on the circuit. That's how you get around it.

SC: You're billed as Ineda King in *TENDER LOVING CARE*.

Joi: That was somebody else's idea. Ineda King. I need-a-king. And I need a castle to go with him, too! (Laughs) I think that had something to do with the union. I finally decided to take my birth name, which is Mary, and put a Lyn on it — Marilyn — and I chose Joi because I'm so happy.

SC: You played a character named Joy in one of your first movies, *MEAN MOTHER*.

Joi: I was in something called *MEAN MOTHER*? I don't remember that at all!

SC: It's a European movie from the late '60s that Al Adamson shot new footage for in 1972 or '73. You're in the new footage.

Joi: Yeah, that sounds like Al. He was always filming something. He'd splice me in here and there — I could be the star of 30 movies and not even know it! Which is fine, as long as I didn't end up in a triple-X movie or something like that!



Marilyn Joi (right) with co-stars Jerry Mills & Sydney Jordan in *THE NAUGHTY STEWARDESSES*

SC: He did the same thing with *UNCLE TOM'S CABIN*.

Joi: Oh, I remember that one! (Laughs) Are you kidding me?! There was no glamor there! That was real swamp water! That was really slimy stuff! Where did that movie go to, anyway?

SC: I don't know, I've never seen it.

Joi: I haven't either. I'd like to see it, though. I got raped in that movie.

SC: And you want to see that?!

Joi: No, of course I don't want to see myself get raped! (Laughs) I want to remember how I let it

happen! I was a slave, and I think I ran away and got caught...or no, maybe I was raped, and then I ran away...

SC: I have a question about *WONDER WOMEN*...

Joi: Oh my God! (Laughs) Who are you?! Are you the FBI?

SC: Nope. I'm not the IRS either.

Joi: Well, you wouldn't see any money from me out of those movies! (Laughs) *WONDER WOMEN* was the karate movie? That was Afro time!

SC: It was shot in the Philippines...

Joi: But my scenes were shot in an Asian restaurant here in L.A. Those were just some pick-ups they had to do — I don't know if they forgot to do them in the Philippines or what, but they asked me to do them and I said, "OK!" It was just a tiny thing.

SC: And you're not billed in the credits.

Joi: I guess not. (Laughs) You know more about my movies than I do!

SC: You don't get billing in *COFFY* either, unless it's under a different name.

Joi: I honestly don't remember. By then, I had the acting bug. I was doing everything. I never thought, "Will this hurt my career?" I could be walking down the street, and if somebody asked me to be in a film, I'd say, "Sure! How much will you pay me? Hmmm...not much. OK, I'll do it anyway!" (Laughs)

SC: It was that easy for you to get movie work?

Joi: It was always like that for me! A lot of people come out [to Hollywood] and never get into a film, but it just happened to me. Here's how I got the REDD FOX VARI-

ETY SHOW — I was sitting in an office, waiting to audition for another part, and this guy walked in, took one look at me, and said, "Hey, you'll do! Come on!" "What for? I'm here for an interview." "OK, who's your agent?" And he called my agent and said, "Tell the other people we got her first!" So I did three or four episodes of the REDD FOX VARIETY SHOW.

SC: You never turned down a part?

Joi: Once. I turned down a part in a Richard Pryor movie [*BLUE COLLAR*] because I had to snort coke during a scene. I asked them, "Do I die?" They said, "No." I asked, "Do I have a good time?"

They said, "Yes." I asked, "Well, how does the scene end?" They said, "We cut to something else." I said, "No, I can't do that! I'll strip naked and have sex in a film if you pay me enough, but I won't do drugs. I don't want to give people the idea that I do drugs, or that I think it's OK to do drugs." So I turned it down, but they called me again and said, "Please do the part." (Laughs) Why did they need me? So many other girls would've done that part! Me, I just couldn't do it.

SC: How did you end up in KENTUCKY FRIED MOVIE?

Joi: They were looking for a girl who was 6'2", so I walked in there wearing a pair of shorts and a little pink t-shirt. They said, "You're not 6'2"!" I said, "Yeah, but I can put on shoes and I got long legs and you can aim the camera up, can't you?" They said, "Welllll...what about your chest?" I said, "Here..." and I took off my t-shirt. "There it is." They said, "OK, you got it!" (Laughs) That was when I was bold!

SC: I'm in the wrong business. I should be a casting director!

Joi: Listen to this — when I auditioned for Corman [for HIT MAN], I showed up in a mink coat with just a bikini under it! (Laughs) When I dropped the mink coat, that was it!

SC: It sounds like you had a winning formula.

Joi: Oh sure! Another film I went out for, they were looking for a girl with a big chest. Well, I already knew that I had that! But I figured all the other girls auditioning for the part would also have big chests, and they'd be wearing dresses with the necks cut really low. So I went in wearing a dress with a high neck — but the back of the dress was cut so low that you could see the beginning of the crack of my butt! I knew when I walked in that I'd get 'em when I walked out! (Laughs) I dropped the little thing that I had on over it, rolled it up and put it in my purse, and just sat there calmly until it was time to go. When I walked out the door, I arched my back like an s-curve, y'know, with a nice round butt? They saw it — "Wow! Hold on! Come back!" (Laughs) They kept me there a half an hour longer, and none of the girls outside knew what happened!

SC: Did the casting couch ever rear its ugly head during those auditions?

Joi: It was a rare thing, but yes, I've had a few producers and directors come on to me. I got one part, but then the director asked me over for a rehearsal to see if I was right for it. I said, "I thought I already had the part." He said, "No, you have to come to my place." I said, "No, you have to call my agent." So then I got a call from my agent saying, "You don't have the part anymore." The majority of the people I've worked with never gave me a hassle, though. Al Adamson never pulled any of that stuff. He was just there to make movies.

SC: Did you encounter racism very often during the casting process?

Joi: Not often, no. I was supposed to do a Glen



Marilyn Joi gets an undraped fright in Al Adamson's NURSE SHERRI

Campbell special one time — in a skit where he was a vacuum cleaner salesman and I was a housewife — but his agent called up and said his fans wouldn't like the idea of him coming on to a sexy black girl, or getting involved with a black housewife. So they cancelled me.

SC: Were you a big Glen Campbell fan?

Joi: Uhhhh...no, not really! (Laughs) And I definitely wasn't one after that! Actually, I don't think Glen Campbell had anything to do with it. It was his agent. At one point, I was supposed to do the Academy Awards, handing out the awards — this was at the time Diana Ross was around — and someone told me, "We can't use you because you have long, black, wavy hair and big eyes, and Ms. Ross won't like that." I said, "Oh really? Well have we asked Ms. Ross?" But otherwise, no, that kind of thing really didn't happen to me. I got a part on CHARLIE'S ANGELS that was supposed to be for a white girl, a blonde. If I saw a part that was for white or blonde or male and I didn't see any reason for the label, I'd say, "What difference does it make? I can do it!"

SC: Were you in any movies that I don't know about?

Joi: I doubt it. You seem to know about everything! (Laughs) I had a part in a movie with Yaphet Kotto. I forgot the name — it's the one with the stand-off in the elevator...

SC: REPORT TO THE COMMISSIONER? I didn't know you were in that!

Joi: Well, I'm not in it anymore! I had a nice scene with Yaphet Kotto in a club, but they cut it out — probably to put more of the elevator in there, since that was the big scene.

SC: We haven't really talked about Al Adamson yet.

Joi: I really liked Al. He was a very nice man, and nothing like the movies he made. I got my best review for one of his films, NURSE SHERRI, either in Variety or Hollywood Reporter. They actually mentioned me in the review and wrote nice things about me! So when I was thinking about getting back into acting, I said to myself, "Maybe I can call Al." Well, a week later I got a call from someone

that Al was dead, and that he'd been murdered. I couldn't believe it. It really hurts me to think about what happened to him. He was such a nice man.

SC: You were in a number of his films. Which was your favorite?

Joi: They were all a lot of fun, but I liked doing Synne [her character in BLACK SAMURAI] the most. That was only supposed to be a little part originally, the bedroom scene. Al talked to me right before we did that — he said, "Marilyn, behave yourself. This is Jim Kelly, he's the star, and don't you forget that now." I said, "Oh, Jim Kelly, OK!" And Jim was supposed to kill me right after the bedroom scene, but I said to him, "Jim, my goodness! What will this look like to your friends? You beat me, you have sex with me, and you kill me? What's the matter with you?" So he went to Al and said, "Y'know, it

doesn't seem right that I kill her. I don't want to kill women." (Laughs) So they wrote all this other stuff for me to do, and Synne got more work! Pretty clever of me, I must say!

SC: You enjoyed playing the villain?

Joi: Oh, I loved it! I just didn't like what they did at the end, when I got stabbed and went "Ooooooh!" I've always found that when the good guys get stabbed in movies, they scream because they're fighting to save their lives. But when the villain gets stabbed, it's a surprise — "I got stabbed? How dare you stab me!" So I just stood there with my mouth open, stunned, not making a sound — and when they overdubbed that "Ooooooh," it really bugged me.



SC: You were also a villain in ILSA, HAREM KEEPER OF THE OIL SHEIKS.

Joi: Oh, that bugged me too! There's a scene in that movie — when we shot it, I had people crying on the set! Crying! In a B-movie! But when they

edited the film, they chopped it up so much that they ruined it.

SC: That's the scene at the end, when Tanya Boyd gets killed?

Joi: Yes, but it wasn't just Tanya dying. I thought about my kid, I thought about my sister — I really put a lot into that scene, but they cut it all up. I run toward Tanya, and they cut away. I pick her up, and they cut away. Instead of letting me run through the room, they cut to all these other people shooting off guns! That's when I learned how important editing is. It can make or break you.

front and asked the guy, "Is this THE HAPPY HOOKER GOES TO WASHINGTON?" "Yeah." "Starring Joey Heatherton and George Hamilton?" "No! This is an X-rated porno theatre!" Ohhhhhhhhh! "Oh, momma, let's go!" (Laughs) All these men were looking at us, and the man behind us, oh God, all I could hear behind us was [makes wet smacking noises]. Oh God!

SC: Are you still recognized in public?

Joi: Yes, and it's always surprising. I used to get recognized all the time for KENTUCKY FRIED MOVIE. Now, people usually say, "Aren't you that

ing around somewhere.

SC: What's your dream role?

Joi: Now? If I went out, I'd try for lawyer roles and more mature females — or something like XENA. (Laughs) I'd love to be on that show! Before, I always wanted to be on MIAMI VICE. They tried to do a show for the black girl on MIAMI VICE, and I went out for the auditions, but it never happened. I went out for a number of soaps, and I made it to the final three or four. A soap would be nice.

SC: Tanya Boyd is on a soap now.

Joi: Yes! She plays the blonde [on DAYS OF OUR LIVES] who talks with the Jamaican accent. She puts spells on people, or something like that. (Laughs) Tanya got me a part on GOOD TIMES once. They were looking for someone, and she said, "Oh no, I've got a girlfriend who's an actress, she's right here!"

SC: Another case of the role finding you.

Joi: I know. If I went out now, I'd probably pull out my hair because there's no one to say, "Hey! Come here!" I don't have the ground that I used to — like in those club scenes, when the producers would ask me if I'd dance in a scene, and then I'd make sure that I got in there a little more. After I did that for Al, he tried to put me in all of his movies. Al kind of spoiled me. He'd say, "I've been trying to find you, you haven't been around" — "Wait, you've been trying to find ME?" (Laughs) I'd really like to get into it again, but I don't know where to start. I've lost contact with everyone. I should have kept in touch with the Zucker Brothers — I could be doing their movies now. Cleopatra Schwartz was a pretty popular character.

SC: Don Edmonds is still around.

Joi: I haven't seen Don Edmonds in a long time! He was one of the guys who gave me a big push early on in my career. He's still making movies?

SC: He produced a horror movie a few years ago called SKEETER, and he was involved with a couple of Quentin Tarantino productions...

Joi: Don Edmonds? Really?

SC: He was the executive producer of TRUE ROMANCE and KILLING ZOE.

Joi: Don Edmonds? (Laughs) Oh, that's funny! I'm glad he's still out there.

SC: Would you do B-movies again?

Joi: I'd love to do B-movies again! I miss it, I really do. I remember when I did one of my first movies, they showed it in Kentucky and my sister called me and said, "We went to see a movie and there you were!" She brought her twins, Eric and Derek, and they jumped up and started yelling, "That's my aunt! Mommy, that's your sister!" (Laughs) And my grandmother would always call me — "You're on TV!" I'd be like, "Huh?! It's four o'clock in the morning! What are you doing up?"

SC: This was an easy interview to pitch. All I did was reel off your credits, and a number of magazines were interested.

Joi: Well, I did do quite a few things for a person who was never, y'know, a star. I was in movies, I was on T.V., I did posters and magazine covers and interviews, I'm on the ILSA t-shirt... (Laughs) I've been immortalized! I can say, "Look, I did films! I really was an actress!"

Special thanks to David Konow. Ω

"There's a scene where he grabs me, and we must've shot that scene ten times! He kept goofing it up so he could grab me around the chest!" — On working with Richard Basehart in MANSION OF THE DOOMED

SC: What do you remember most about THE HAPPY HOOKER GOES TO WASHINGTON?

Joi: Bending over and sticking my butt in George Hamilton's face! (Laughs) That was the best part of that!

SC: Are you embarrassed by any of your movies?

Joi: I couldn't have been too embarrassed — I was looking to find Al again! (Laughs) I'm not embarrassed by anything I've done. I was a dancer, but when I started doing movies, people told me, "You shouldn't say you were a dancer." I'd say, "Y'know what? I didn't see you knocking on my door, offering me food and paying my bills!" I've done roles, and I've gone out for roles, that were much harsher than my dancing. So what's the issue here? Being an actress isn't exactly like being called to popehood! (Laughs)

SC: Who was the most difficult person to work with?

Joi: For me? No one! I never had problems with any actor or actress. I got along with everybody because I didn't believe the hype. Take the Jim Kelly thing — Al told me he was Jim Kelly, but he was never mean to me or anything like that. We talked, we had lunch together, he drove me around town. He was a nice guy.

SC: What about Richard Basehart?

Joi: He grabbed me around the chest every chance he got! (Laughs) There's a scene [in MANSION OF THE DOOMED] where he grabs me, and we must've shot that scene ten times! He kept goofing it up so he could grab me around the chest!

SC: Do you have any good stories about seeing your films in the theatres?

Joi: I probably shouldn't tell you this story... (Laughs) I took my mother to see THE HAPPY HOOKER GOES TO WASHINGTON, but I didn't know that there was a porno flick out at the time with the same title! I saw the listing, and the theatre was right over here on Santa Monica between Fairfax and I think Crescent. I said, "Oh, momma, my movie's out! It's right around the corner! Let's go see it!" So we sit in the theatre, and there are all these men... (Laughs) And this movie comes on, and it's reaaaaaally dirty! My momma's looking at me — I'm like, "There's something wrong with this movie, momma! That's not me!" I ran out to the

girl...that nurse...that stewardess..." I just go, "What nurse? Where? What stewardess?" (Laughs) Sometimes I get leery of the guys who come up to me on the street. I'll pretend I don't know what they're talking about — I'll say, "Oh, I hear that all the time!" I had one guy tell me, "I rent all your tapes and I make copies of them and watch them over and over — and when the tapes get messed up, I rent 'em again!" (Laughs) I never could understand that. Whenever I saw someone with my poster, I'd ask my friends, "Why did that guy buy my poster? He could go get Playboy!"



SC: You were always on the cover of Players during the '80s.

Joi: Yeah, they really liked me there. They told me whenever they put me on the cover, they sold a lot of issues.

SC: And then readers would write in and complain that you never did a nude layout for them.

Joi: I know! I did do some of those pictures, but they were never published. I'm sure they're float-



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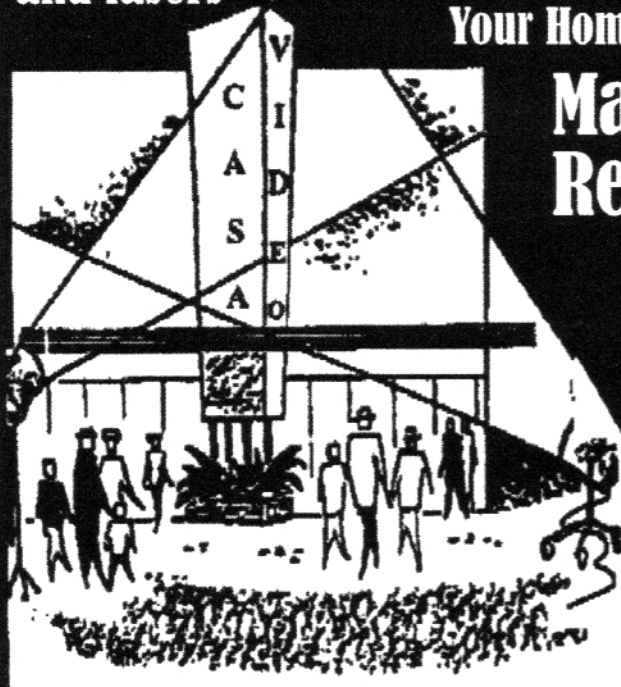
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Alien Prey ('83/UK) Alien interlopes two lesbians ☐ Amuck! ('78/Ital.) Farley Granger/Barbara Bouchet ☐ Assault ('70/UK) Suzy Kendall, Frank Finlay ☐ Asylum Erotica ('71/Ital) Klaus Kinski, Rosalba Neri ☐ Baron Munchausen ('43/In Ger. w/Eng subs) Rare ☐ A Bell From Hell ('73/Spain) Viveca Lindfors ☐ Beyond The Darkness ('79) Twisted Joe D'Amato dir ☐ Beyond the Door ('74/Italian) Exorcist exploitation ☐ The Big Bust Out ('73/Ital) WIP Epic/Nudity & rape ☐ The Big Zapper ('73/UK) Violent PI Linda Marlowe ☐ The Bitch ('79/UK) Joan Collins in disco sex movie ☐ The Black Panther ('77/UK) Sadist tortures heiress ☐ Blood of the Vampire ('88/UK) Barbara Shelley ☐ The Blood Spattered Bride ('72/Ital) Carmilla rises ☐ The Body ('67/Italian) Carroll Baker's 1st Giallo ☐ Body Talk ('81/X) Angelique Pettyjohn, Kay Parker ☐ Brain of Blood ('71/Filipino) Al Adamson directs ☐ Burke and Hare ('71/UK) Yutte Stensgaard nude! ☐ Cafe Flesh ('79 X) Uncut post nude sexcapades! ☐ Castle of Unholy Desires ('67/Spain) Adrian Hoven dir. ☐ Count Dracula ('78/BBC TV) Louis Jordan, 2 hrs ☐ Creature with the Blue Hand ('71/German) K. Kinski ☐ Cry of a Prostitute ('72/Italian) Barbara Bouchet ☐ Dark Places ('72/UK) Joan Collins/Christopher Lee ☐ Death Faces ('88/UK) Disgusting real atrocities! ☐ The Demons ('72) Jess Franco's sex-crazed nuns ☐ The Devil Doll ('64/UK) Yvonne Romain ☐ The Devil Ship Pirates ('64/UK) Christopher Lee ☐ Desert Tigers ('79/Ital.) Lea Lander & raping Nazis ☐ Dr. Jekyll et les Femmes ('81/in Fren/Libx) Udo Kier ☐ Dr. Terror's House of Horrors ('64) Cushing, Lee ☐ Dracula Blows His Cool ('79/German) Sex farce ☐ Emmanuelle's Revenge ('76/Ital.) Joe D'Amato dir. ☐ Escape From Blood Plantation ('75/Ital.) Udo Kier ☐ Eyes Without a Face ('59/in French/Eng subs/Libx.) ☐ Frankenstein's Great-Aunt Tillie ('83/UK) Pleasance ☐ Fraulein Devil ('77/Ital.) 3rd Reich Pleasure Train ☐ The Groove Room ('73/UK) Diana Dore, Sex comedy ☐ Horror of the Zombies ('74/Spain) 3rd Blind Dead ☐ Hot & Saucy Pizza Girls ('78/X) Desiree Cousteau ☐ House on Straw Hill ('75) Linda Hayden, Udo Kier ☐ The Human Beast ('78/Italian) Helmut Berger ☐ Hundra ('85/Ital.) Laurence Landon, Marissa Cassel ☐ I Want You ('78/X) Uschi Digart, John Holmes ☐ The Icebox Murders ('81/Spain) Jack Taylor ☐ Ilsa, She Wolf of the S.S. ('74) Dyanne Thorne ☐ Ilsa, The Wicked Warden ('77) Jess Franco/ Uncut ☐ Inn of the Damned ('74/Australian) Alex Cord ☐ Island of the Burning Doomed ('67/UK) P. Cushing ☐ Lady Slay Dead ('83/Aust) Gory psycho on the loose ☐ Land of the Minotaur ('77/UK) Peter Cushing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ The Legend of Blood Castle ('72/Spain-Italian) ☐ Legend of the Wolfwoman ('76/Italian) Nude wolf! ☐ Let's Get Laid ('77/UK) Linda Hayden in sex romp ☐ The Love Camp ('80/German) Laura Gemser naked ☐ The Loves of Irina ('73) Uncut 'X' Jess Franco dir. ☐ Make Them Die Slowly ('80/Ital.) Umberto Lenzi dir. ☐ Mandinga ('76/Italian) Plantations, slaves and sex ☐ Ms. Silento ('69/Ital.) Brigitte Skay, Fred Williams ☐ Naked Super Witches of the Rio Amore ('77) Franco ☐ Night of the Seagulls ('75/Spain) 4th Blind Dead ☐ Night Train Murders ('74/Ital./Libx) Aldo Lado dir. ☐ Nothing But the Night ('72/UK) C. Lee, P. Cushing ☐ Nuns of S. ant Archangelo ('73/ Italian/Letterboxed) ☐ Obsession: A Taste For Fear ('89/Italian) Uncut ☐ Orgias Inconfessables de Emmanuelle ('82/in Spain.) ☐ The Other Hell ('80/ Italian) Possessed naked nuns! ☐ The Oval Portrait ('72/Mex) Based on Edgar A. Poe ☐ Pets ('73) Candice Raison in cult S&M erotica ☐ Pirates of Blood River ('62/UK) Christopher Lee ☐ The Raincoat Crowd ('79/X) Desiree Cousteau ☐ Return of the Zombies ('72/Spain) Paul Naschy ☐ The Rogue ('76/Ital) Barbara Bouchet, Margaret Lee ☐ The Rue Morgue Massacre ('72/Spain) Paul Naschy ☐ Salon Kitty ('76/Ital.) Helmut Berger, Ingrid Thulin ☐ Seven Blows of the Dragon ('73/Chin/Eng dubbed) ☐ The Sex Machine ('75/Italian) Agostina Belli, "R" ☐ The Sexorcist ('74/Ital.) Stella Carnachia writhes! ☐ The Sin of Adam and Eve ('72/Mex.) Bible nude! ☐ Slave of the Cannibal God ('78) Ursula Andress ☐ Slayers ('79) Slave trade epic. Britt Eklund, Ron Ely ☐ S.S. Hell Camp ('76/Ital) Violence, Nudity, Torture! ☐ Stairline Motel ('75/Ital) Ursula Andress, Barbara Bach ☐ Summer Affair ('79/Ital.) Ornella Muti skinnydips ☐ Syndicate Sadists ('72/Ital.) Umberto Lenzi directs ☐ Terror ('74/Italian) Nun takes revenge on her rapist ☐ The Terronauts ('67/UK-Amicus) Zena Marshall ☐ Tiffany Jones ('74/UK) Anouska Hempel. Sex spoof ☐ Tits Play She's A Whore ('73/Ital.) Charlotte Rampling ☐ Titillation ('82/X) Angelique Pettyjohn, K. Natavidad ☐ Tomb of Torture ('63/Italian) Annie Albert/Rare ☐ Torso ('73/Italian) Suzy Kendall, John Richardson ☐ Torture Chamber of Dr. Sadism ('67/Ital) Chris Lee ☐ Tower of Evil ('72/UK) Bryant Halliday, Jill Haworth ☐ 1009: A Sex Odyssey ('76/Ger.) Sex-Fi Alien Babes ☐ El Vampiro ('57/Mex./ in Spanish) German Robles ☐ Vampyres ('74/UK/Uncut) Anika, Marianne Morris ☐ The Virgin of Nuremberg ('63/Italian) Chris Lee ☐ Welcome to Blood City ('77/UK) Jack Palance ☐ When the Screaming Stops ('72/Spain) Helga Lite ☐ A Witch Without a Broom ('68/Spain) Maria Perschy ☐ Witchfinder General ('68/UK) Vincent Price, Uncut |
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SHOCK CINEMA talks with Cult Character Actor

SID HAIG

By JERRY RENSHAW

I had the good fortune to make Sid Haig's acquaintance last year at Austin's South by Southwest Film Festival. Looking across the Convention Center, which was absolutely lousy with film types, I saw his head sticking several inches above everyone else's; he came with Jack Hill and Mrs. Hill for the festival and screenings of several of Hill's movies. Opting for the subtle approach, I came up and said "You're Jack Hill, right?", followed by "And you must be Sid Haig". We hit it off right away and have kept a dialogue going ever since. Tall and toothy, Haig's unmistakable, scene-stealing presence is usually associated with Jack Hill's exploitation classics *SPIDER BABY*, *THE BIG BIRD CAGE* and *THE BIG DOLL HOUSE*. His career, however, spans 45 feature films and too many TV guest appearances to count. Haig often filled in on whatever miscellaneous duties came his way, making himself a valuable asset (for instance, you can spot him playing drums for the Righteous Brothers in the mid-Sixties teen pic *BEACH BALL*). Now sixtyish, Haig is very personable and down-to-earth, with a sincerity that is gratifying considering how haughty many stars can be. More than that, though, he gives the impression of a man at peace with himself, having found a niche in life that he's happy with. After a long and rewarding career in movies, Sid is now semi-retired (his last screen appearance being in Tarantino's '97 *JACKIE BROWN*).

SC: You got your feet on the ground at the Pasadena Playhouse, right?

Haig: Yeah.

SC: And that would have been about when?

Haig: '59 to '61.

SC: That was a real fertile ground for a lot of people...

Haig: Oh definitely. That was for years and years the only real training ground for actors on the West Coast. It was really a whole lot of stuff going on there, it was pretty legit.

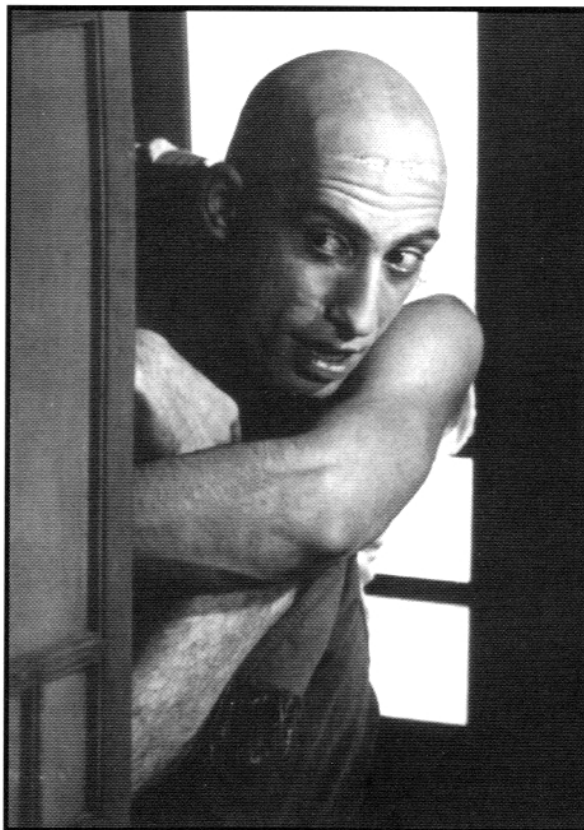
SC: Who were some of the folks that were your contemporaries at the Playhouse?

Haig: Well, let's see, Stuart Margolin, y'know, Angel from *THE ROCKFORD FILES*? He was my roommate. Celia Kaye, starred in *BLUE DENIM*; I guess that was her color, she was in *ISLAND OF THE BLUE DOLPHINS*, stuff like that. A year ahead of me was Dustin Hoffman and Ruth Buzzi, Gene Hackman was in there, and Earl Holliman, a whole lot of folks.

SC: What had you done prior to then that led you to Pasadena Playhouse?

Haig: I was really interested in drama when I was

in high school and college. I was primarily interested in music, though. I started, collected my first check at the age of six as a dancer. I just kind of transitioned my way from that into music and drama; I had never even heard of the Pasadena Playhouse, until this friend of mine, we hooked up one summer. I was in my second year of college and he said, "Y'know, you really should go to the Pasadena Playhouse," and I got a real quick education in what was going on there, applied, got the letters of recommendation and got accepted. Little did I know what I was letting myself in for! It turned into a two-year boot camp, we were just going day and night, never had a chance to breathe. It was insane!



Sid Haig peers from his dumbwaiter in Jack Hill's *SPIDER BABY*

SC: I heard that they took actors and worked 'em pretty doggone hard.

Haig: I had my first class at 7:30 in the morning and didn't get out until eleven at night. Then we'd come home, do homework, get ready to do it all over again. That's the kind of place it was for two years running.

SC: There must have been a pretty high washout rate...

Haig: We had 130 people in my class, and we graduated 32. Of that 32, you can call two of us

working actors. It's not all limousines and bright lights, let me tell ya, the work is so demanding, people just don't have a clue. I know that things have changed a lot...As a matter of fact, I'm gonna be giving a speech at a performing arts high school, and I know they're gonna ask me how to get started in the business. In my day, you just wore 'em down. Now, what I'd have to tell someone is get yourself a real good MBA contract, put up some fantastic numbers through your contract and then just walk on. That's what I'd say today, cause that's the way it's done. I don't make a lot of friends when I say this kind of thing, but there's not a whole lot of actors out there. There's a lot of people who stand in front of cameras and say words,

but not a whole lot of actors. That's not what people want to hear, but I don't tell people what they want to hear; I tell 'em what they need to know. It allows me to look at myself in the mirror in the morning, but it hasn't made me a very popular guy...I won't mention any names because that would be unkind, but I was on a series and one of the leads on the series knew so little about his craft that he was sitting in his chair reading "An Actor Prepares". I walked by and said, "Hey kid, you got the job, OK? It's a little too late for that". At least he knew, though!

SC: From Pasadena Playhouse to *SPIDER BABY*, how did you and Jack Hill hook up, then?

Haig: Well, he was getting ready to do his student film, and he really wasn't pleased with anyone they had over at UCLA at the time, there just weren't any actors available that were qualified. Dorothy Arzner, the head of the film department at the time — Dorothy Arzner was the first female director in Hollywood — she had either seen my work at the playhouse or one of my directors got to talking and said, "Well, you ought to have Sid come in and read for you." Either way, I went in and read for him, and he thought I was sufficiently weird enough, and that, believe it or not, started a 35-year association. I have done a whole lot of work with Jack and he's one of the few people I'd work with anytime he needed me. I'm not saying that because I'm so cool I won't work with anyone, but I've come to realize that there's only a few people in this town that

get it, and say "son of a gun, the guy is really an actor." There are only a few of those people around, so I decided I'd make room for somebody else, I'm out of here. One of those few people is Jack, and though the association is very young and new, one of the others is Quentin Tarantino. If Quentin had anything for me to do, I'd be there to do it. My association with Roger Corman goes back almost as far as with Jack. The film that we did after Jack's student film was a film that Roger produced, so that association has gone on for a long time as well.

SC: *SPIDER BABY* had to have been a pretty tight shooting schedule...

Haig: Eleven days (laughs)! We took eleven whole days on that.

SC: Was it Jack's idea to shave your head?

Haig: Yeah, and it made sense, because the guy had just got back from having a lobotomy. My wife was a little freaked out, I mean I'd only been married about three months and one day I came in with a razor and said, "OK, start shavin'." That created a whole look that hung on for a very long period of time.

SC: And I'm sure that no one expected that movie to have the legs that it did.

Haig: Absolutely not. We thought we were kind of doing OK, but who knew? "Well, we're out here, and we're making this thing, and we're having some fun," but I didn't think anybody had any idea that it would take off like it did. It was a pretty amazing experience.

SC: Did you enjoy acting alongside Lon Chaney Jr.?

Haig: My experience working with Lon Chaney Jr. was more than one could hope for. He was everything that you would not expect to encounter from someone at the end of a very checkered career. He was kind, gracious, helpful, and completely charming. And I, of course, was taken aback by his presence. After all, I had grown up watching his films and now I was there working with him.



SC: In Jack Hill's *PIT STOP* you played a psycho race car driver who takes an ax to a competitor's car. Did you enjoy that?

Haig: Chopping up the car in *PIT STOP* was great. Who hasn't wanted to do that? Guys would stop me on the street and thank me because that was something they had always wanted to do.

SC: One of your co-stars in *PIT STOP* was Ellen Burstyn, in one of her earliest films...

Haig: As for working with Ellen Burstyn (then known as Ellen McRae), I don't know. It was like she was never connected to any of us. She was very professional, always prepared. But very detached.

"I was to speak in some South American native dialect but no one would tell me what that was. I was also supposed to be an expert at 'the Dance' but no one would show me how."

— On the making of *THE FORBIDDEN DANCE*

SC: I know a lot of the stuff you did with Jack was in the Philippines. That's a whole different ball game over there, right?

Haig: Absolutely. The first thing you have to realize over there is that there's eight days in the week; seven that we know about, and tomorrow. Tomorrow can kind of slip in between the other seven, and you've just got to kinda hang with that. There's a whole different attitude, and a whole different schedule to doing things there, and of course it's a much cheaper place to shoot movies in terms of labor. As long as you don't freak out, you survive. I had a lot of fun in the Philippines, let me tell ya. Kind of crazy, but a lot of fun. Great in terms of totally campy, bizarre, kind out-there things.

SC: Eddie Romero, what was his role in those films?

Haig: He and John Ashley were partners, Ashley just died last year, shooting a film and just keeled over. I was very sad to hear that. At any rate, they were partners, and Eddie had a lot of connections that were very useful. That's one place where the old saying of "it's not what you know, it's who you know", definitely holds true. He could make things happen that other people couldn't. When the politics over there started getting so weird, though, I started losing contact with people. I'm very sorry that that happened, but it just did. I was there, and staying in a hotel when the action took place that precipitated martial law. The mayor and Marcos' brother didn't get along, and it was a definite O.K. Corral deal. I was out shooting that day and people were roaming around grumbling, then I looked around and there were bullet holes all over the place! But that place was so goofy it didn't make any difference. It just meant that you couldn't be out after midnight, so the bar owners would just padlock the doors from the inside and people would just stay inside and party until 6 in the morning, then start it all over the next night!

SC: You and Jack are still in pretty regular contact, I know. Do you ever see much of Pam Grier?

Haig: No, Pam and I kind of lost touch...but at the same time when we showed up on the set to do *JACKIE BROWN*, it was like we had just had lunch the day before. Our friendship is that kind of thing, because the one thing that anyone who was really in the trenches in doing stuff in the Philippines, you're out there fighting for your life. You develop close bonds with people, digging around in the dirt and flopping in the mud, putting your body through stress that you really shouldn't, and you start to form really close bonds with people. I'm sure that's part of our friendship. She's great, and I'm really

glad to see things happen for her that have been happening. She's a survivor, she stuck it out and knew what she wanted and hung in there until she got it. I worked with plenty of talented people at Pasadena Playhouse, but they didn't have the one element of genius that was necessary, and that's desire. Einstein was asked one time what his def-

inition of genius was, and he said, "Genius is comprised of imagination, visualization, intuition and desire". You can learn to cultivate the first three, but without the fourth one, it won't amount to anything. That's why we lose a lot of people along the way; this business has more casualties than people think.

SC: Yeah, I remember you telling me about in the Sixties driving across Los Angeles like a maniac from the set of *MISSION IMPOSSIBLE* to the set of *GUNSMOKE* every day. You were crazy-busy there for a long time.

Haig: I had a great run, y'know, and the one thing that most producers hate is for someone else to have something that they don't have. I was working like a fool, and that made everyone else say, "Why isn't he working for me?!", while Casting is looking at their feet and trying to come up with a good answer. That's how I got a lot of great roles, and that's just that I was working a lot, for "other people". There was a show that guys were killing one another to get on; remember the *BATMAN* series? I got called in the office one day and they said, "Pick your part. There's only one part you can't have, and that's this. Otherwise, pick your part." It was the Alchemist part, and Victor Buono had that sewed up, but otherwise, I had my pick.

SC: Yeah, that show was a real status symbol, Frank Gorshin, Burgess Meredith, Cesar Romero, Julie Newmar, tons of people...I definitely remember seeing you on *MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE* when I was a little kid.

Haig: I did more guest appearances on *MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE* than any other actor. I did nine episodes before they started playing it cheap and getting the international elements out of it. Before that, they wanted to have a show people wanted to watch, and I was the man, and I was proud of it. I'd go in at the beginning of the season with a beard, then I'd do one without the beard. Like that would make a big difference, but that's the way we did it...

SC: I loved spotting you in *POINT BLANK!* I poked my wife and said, "Hey, look at the guard in the lobby, that's Sid Haig!" I love seeing you pop up in odd places now and then.

Haig: That was a wild kind of experience. I went in and interviewed for that, and John Boorman, he was a very inventive guy and really listened to his people, tried to pick things up from people along the way. He didn't know a lot about the kind of films he was doing, so he asked me in the interview...if I were a hitman and I knew who my target was, how would I do it? I gave him this little scenario of how I'd do it, and said I'd dum-dum the

shells. He wasn't familiar with that, so I described cutting a star into the slug, making it go in like a dime and come out like a cash register. Well, if I'm not mistaken, that line made it into the film; it wasn't in the original script! But that's how he worked, he took from his people and had a kind of different realism. My son was born the day before shooting started, by the way.

SC: Let me ask you about JASON OF STAR COMMAND. You had a pretty chewable role in that. Was that a good time?

Haig: I had a ball with that! That was so much fun. At the same time, it was really a tough piece to do, because they were very smart. Their budget was limited, they didn't have a whole lot to spend on actors and overtime, so we did all of the scenes for the control tower, all 15 episodes; then all the spaceship scenes, back to back, all fifteen episodes. It was like one giant script you'd be schlepping around; sixteen episodes in five weeks. Pretty intense. In five weeks time, a show like ER will do four shows. But it was so much fun. Grueling, because of the schedule, but you almost didn't care, and the perks on that show were great. Since it was all short money, we got paid for all 15 episodes plus ten reruns of each episode, all in advance.

SC: Well, that's pretty sweet!!

Haig: Definitely. That eased the pain a little bit, plus we were making more money doing public appearances than from doing the show. It was a wild ride, I'll tell ya.

SC: Weren't you on about a half-dozen STAR TREK episodes?

Haig: No, I was only on one. People ask me about that, but I was only on the one. Sometimes I think they're getting confused with BUCK ROGERS, because I was on three or four of them. It all gets mashed together sometimes.

SC: What was it like playing a rain forest witch doctor in Greydon Clark's THE FORBIDDEN DANCE?

Haig: LAMBADA? It could have been worse than it was...I guess. The communication was less than it could have been, or should have been. As an example, I was to speak in some South American native dialect but no one would tell me what that was. I was also supposed to be an expert at "the Dance" but no one would show me how. The kids that were in the show were treating it like we were doing "Hamlet". They would go to their acting coaches after work to help them prepare for the next days work. That would have been fine if we were doing the great American film, but they never really got that they were hired to shake their butts. The only person who had a clue was the choreographer, Maranda Garrison; she was literally giving us direction over a bull horn while the camera was rolling.

SC: DEATH CAR ON THE FREEWAY...

Haig: God, you're really going back!!

SC: Directed by Hal Needham, with Abe Vigoda, Shelley Hack, Frank Gorshin? That must have been a TV-movie.

Haig: Oh yeah. And George Hamilton, don't forget. Uhh...that was really kind of adventurous, let's put it that way. Some of the stunts were kinda bootlegged, like you'd just go out and do it. That was before Shelley Hack ever became one of CHARLIE'S ANGELS.



Haig as villainous Drago in JASON OF STAR COMMAND, with cast members including James Doohan (left)

SC: WONDER WOMEN? Ross Hagen?

Haig: One of those films that I did because I was there. They had heard that there was an American actor who was just doing everything in the Philippines, and rather than bring somebody over, they checked me out and decided to play the game with me partly because I was there and accessible, and secondly because by that time I knew who to go to to get stuff done and who to stay away from. They just felt like it was advantageous to go with me.

SC: That's with Nancy Kwan?

SH: Yeah.

SC: Was she in EBONY, IVORY AND JADE?

Haig: No, but it would have been better if she had been.

SC: Yeah, that's a film that doesn't live up to the trailer...What do you recall about your biker movie C.C. AND COMPANY, in which you starred opposite Joe Namath, Ann-Margret and William Smith?

Haig: Now, saving the best for last, I was totally prepared not to like Joe Namath because I'd had it with ex-football players walking on as the star of a film. I still do feel that way, I mean have you ever

seen Dennis Rodman on film? I didn't think anything could be worse than his attitude but his acting reaches a new low in the human experience. Sorry... Joe was a really charming guy who you could not help but like. There is not enough ink to describe the way I feel about Ann-Margret. I really don't think people know just how good she is. C.C. AND COMPANY was just so much fluff, so she didn't look like she was doing anything, but trust me she can rock your world (check out her performance in STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE). Bill

Smith? Another underrated actor. I guess there is something to the idea that how well you perform your job accounts for only 20% of your success. I think one of the reasons that Bill and I are such good friends is that we don't pay a lot of attention to being P.C.

SC: So bring us up to date on what Sid Haig's doing now.

Haig: Well, I'm a certified hypnotherapist. It's something that came together rapidly and has turned into a very rewarding experience. I guess I kind of came into it easily, because I work very organically and have read more books on psychology and the mind than maybe I should have. Now I'm in a line of work where I'm creating the behavior and identifying it, with the understanding of the client that they want to see changes in life. Being able to enable them to do that is a big plus, very fulfilling. You see someone come in in pain, sometimes physical, sometimes just emotionally beat up, and you can do something to turn that around and show them how to do it for themselves. The goal, oddly enough, is to never have to see your client again.

That's where we know we're doing OK. It's an extremely rewarding pursuit.

SC: And you've got SAVE — Stage and Video Education?

Haig: Yeah, that's been a real struggle to keep that afloat. Even if the kids take it seriously a lot of times the parents won't, so they basically feel no qualms about pulling their kid out to see Aunt Tillie or whatever, so you're constantly working around schedules of people's stuff that gets in the way of work. But, there are some kids I've run into who have made it worthwhile, have had the dedication and talent. There are some kids who have given up some pretty spectacular things just to be able to come and work in a show, and that makes it worth doing. For the most part, my career has been an extremely rewarding and satisfying one. I don't for one minute want anyone to think that I'm not appreciative of being able to do this for these years. It's been an honor, and I don't use words like that lightly. It's almost a religious experience, when you suddenly start making breakthroughs for yourself and you're on top of, inside that character, and that's the best that it gets. That's the one thing that I miss about acting; if there's anything I miss, it's that, but I just got so burned out on doing the same character over and over and over. Ω

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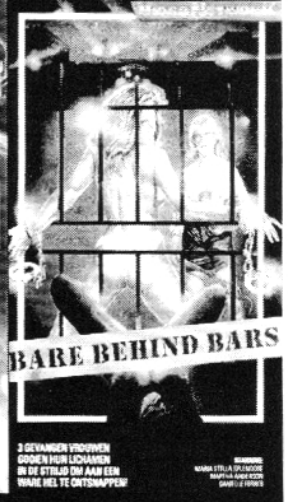
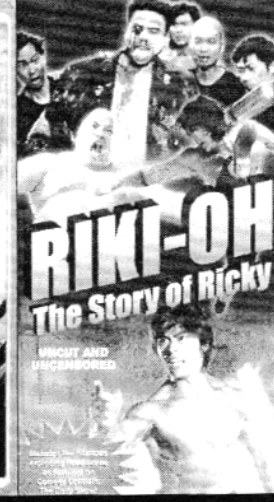
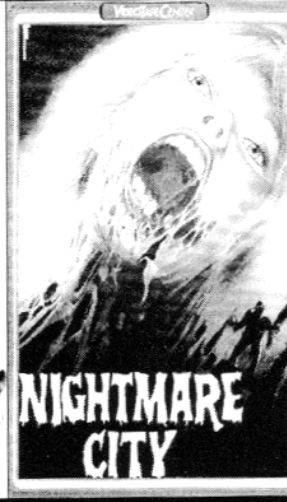
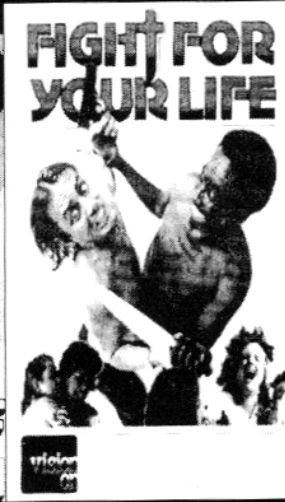
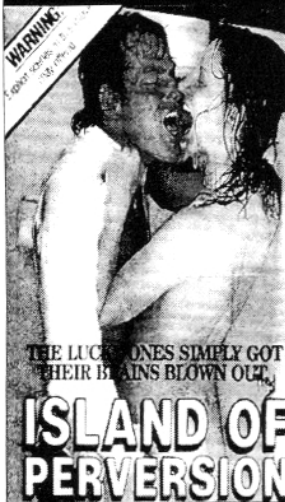
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FILM FLOTJAM

READERS' REVIEWS

ANDREW J. RAUSCH; Parsons, Kansas.

DEATH COLLECTOR [a.k.a. Family Enforcer] (1975). Any gangster movie aficionado worth his salt has seen Scorsese's trilogy, the two GODFATHER films (let's just pretend that piece-of-shit third installment doesn't exist), DONNIE BRASCO, RESERVOIR DOGS, the John Woo/Chow Yun Fat collaborations, etc. The good gangster flick is almost as rare as finding a good performance in Eric Roberts' filmography. Fans of the genre are forced to endure endless hours of so-so fare such as CARLITO'S WAY to out-and-out dogshit like THE LAST DON and LANSKY (which, ironically enough, actually does feature a good performance from Julia's no-talent brother). All of this run-of-the-mill product makes the discovery of a top-rate flick like DEATH COLLECTOR all the more exciting. When released in 1975, film critics and moviegoers wrongly perceived it as a low-quality MEAN STREETS knock-off. Had they actually taken the time to watch the film, they might have been surprised to discover that, in many ways, it's superior to MEAN STREETS. Writer/director Ralph DeVito's script excels beyond that of MEAN STREETS', but is not afforded the luxuries of a classic rock-and-roll soundtrack, a young Harvey Keitel, or an in-the-zone Robert De Niro. DEATH COLLECTOR has an interesting score, which is a groovy '70s mixture of CHIPS and blaxploitation. Unfortunate for all of us, due to the poor box-office of the largely unnoticed DEATH COLLECTOR, Ralph DeVito never made another film. However, this rare gem wasn't unnoticed by everyone as apparently Scorsese himself enjoyed it. Upon watching the film, this becomes apparent as we see many actors who later turn up in Scorsese's work, such as Joe Pesci and Frank Vincent, as well as a number of themes that will later rear their heads in GOODFELLAS and CASINO. One of the film's funnier scenes has Vincent reprimanding his bodyguard to "get some class" and stop carrying his pistol in his pocket. Moments later, Vincent and the bodyguard are gunned down by an assassin, who then slides his pistol into his pocket. In another humorous scene, which is suspiciously similar to GOODFELLAS, a clowning around-Pesci attacks a restaurant employee with a handful of peanuts. The film also features an assortment of uniquely colorful characters, which include a flatulating bi-sexual Rainman-like wiseguy named Serg and a funky black Afro-sporting hitman. If you are fortunate enough to locate a dusty copy on a shelf at your local video store, by all means rent it. Better yet, stick it down the front of your pants and just keep it. You will definitely want to watch this one again and again.

THE AFTERLIFE OF GRANDPA (1988). By looking at director P.J. Pesce's first two full-length features THE DESPERATE TRAIL and FROM DUSK TILL DAWN 3: THE HANGMAN'S DAUGHTER, you'd never guess he was a protégé of legendary auteur Martin Scorsese. This is not to say those films are not up to Scorsese's standard; to the contrary -- both films are superb. It's just that Scorsese isn't generally associated with the Western or horror genres. (Allison Anders, another of Scorsese's proteges, is much the same way.) However, Pesce's obscure award-winning short THE AFTERLIFE OF GRANDPA plays like one of Scorsese's own shorts. Like his mentor, Pesce

appears in his own film, focuses on Italian-American characters, and even uses Scorsese-regular Frank Vincent (RAGING BULL, GOODFELLAS). In this hilarious 20-minute film, 17-year-old Michael (Pesce) is visited by the ghost of his long-deceased grandfather, who has come to ask him for a favor. He wants to "borrow" his grandson's body long enough to have sex with Michael's virgin girlfriend Kelly. "I knew I never should have taken acid!" Michael says, not believing what he's seeing and hearing. However, he soon realizes that this is no flashback; his dead grandfather really does want to go to bed with his girlfriend! Pesce's script is superb, the direction is on-point,

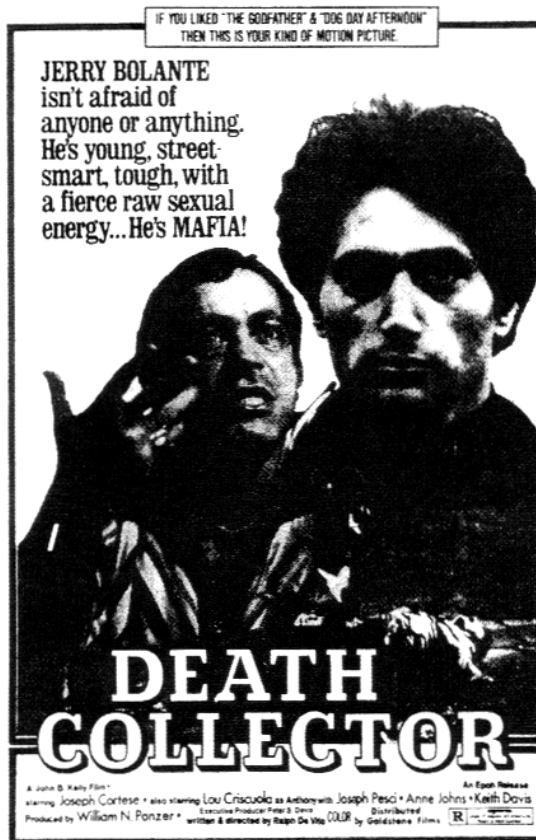
and the acting is first-rate. Pesce convincingly fills the role with such charisma that you begin to wonder if he didn't miss his calling as an actor. Making a solid first film is difficult enough, but making a solid first film with yourself as the lead is almost unheard of. For THE AFTERLIFE OF GRANDPA, Pesce won a Special Grand Jury Award at the Houston International Film Festival (previous recipients include Steven Spielberg and David Lynch) and The Young Filmmaker of the Year Award at the Edinburgh Film Festival. Despite these awards, the film is still difficult to come by due to the limited exposure short films receive, being too short for either theatrical release or any practical widespread video distribution. However, the film is definitely worth searching for.

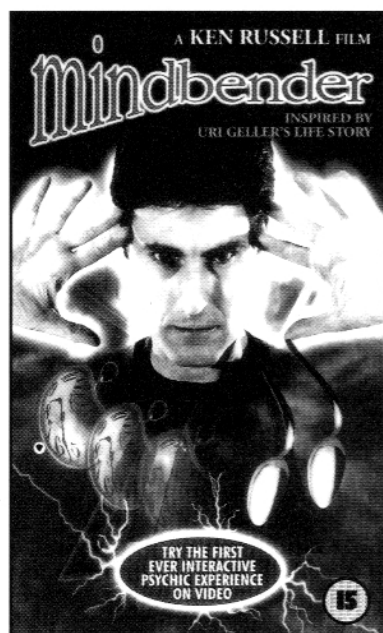
ADAM GROVES; Manhattan Beach, CA.

TIS PITY SHE'S A WHORE (1970). The kind of flick I'm always searching for, but rarely find: an obscure, beautifully made, completely WHACKED masterpiece. Medieval punk Giovanni returns to his family's monastery after serving in the military and promptly falls in love with his grown sister (played by the ever stroke-able Charlotte Rampling). "Just because I'm her brother my charms are forever to be banned from her bed?" he rages. Naturally, his fellow clergymen aren't too understanding, and tragedy — not to mention all-out slaughter — ensues. A simple plot description (the film is "Freely Adapted" from John Ford's classic tragedy) simply cannot do

justice to the astonishing visual intensity director Giuseppe Patroni Griffi (COLLECTOR'S ITEM) achieves. Vittorio Storaro's cinematography has never been finer, and the crumbling Italian villas that populate the film rank with the most sumptuous movie scenery ever (as do Rampling's oft-exposed tits!). But look out for the blood-soaked finale, sure to send the Merchant Ivory crowd running for the exits. Just make sure you see the letterboxed import print and NOT the heavily edited Academy video version.

LAS ROSAS DEL MILAGRO (1968). For those who don't know, the Virgin of Guadeloupe supposedly appeared to a young monk on several occasions back in the 15th century and convinced him to construct a church in her honor. What makes this Mexican dramatization such a curio is that it starts off amongst the Aztecs, complete with hilariously cheesy sets and a pair of star crossed lovers who eventually meet in outer space(?); and let's not forget that sacrifice, with dozens of scantily clad extras standing around as a tied-down criminal gets his heart cut out of his chest; yikes! Unfortunately, things go downhill fast in the pukeably sentimental second half, which concerns itself





psychic warfare tests in a laboratory. He escapes by telepathically knocking his captors unconscious and bending their gun barrels. The action then jumps forward into the future, where Uri interrupts an Olympic broadcast and gets viewers to psychically dismantle the world's nuclear weapons, and a good thing, too, because the Japanese(?) have just fired on the US. The offending missile is knocked out of the sky and spun off into space. Just when I was sure this flick couldn't possibly get any more asinine, the real Uri Geller pre-empts the end credits to perform the "first ever interactive psychic experience on video." He directs the viewer to "plaaaze your 'and on ze tele-fission screen; feel ze power ov ze cozmooz courzing zroo your feengers; now you're at one viss all living theengs!" What the FUCK was Russell thinking???

THE SEVENTH CONTINENT (1989). I see lots of 'disturbing' flicks, but can honestly say that NO recent film has gotten under my skin like this one. That's all the more remarkable because it contains no physical violence — I'm usually skeptical of films that rely on 'atmosphere' to achieve their effects, but this one WORKS, dammit! It's about a German family imploding from the pressures of contemporary society, eventually barricading themselves in their house in a bizarre suicide pact. The first hour or so initially looks like some sort of Bressonian experimental drama, with long, naturalistic sequences of the family's numbing middle-class lifestyle interspersed with idyllic glimpses of the longed-for (but never to be reached) "Seventh Continent." Eventually, though, the film resolves itself into a devastating indictment of consumerism that leaves FIGHT CLUB in the dust. Writer-director Michael Haneke has tried to replicate TSC's feel in subsequent efforts like BENNY'S VIDEO and FUNNY GAMES, but it remains a one-of-a-kind masterpiece; not to mention one of the most depressing movies ever made.

WARRENDALE (1967). Although mostly forgotten today, this was one of the most controversial documentaries of its time. Made by acclaimed filmmaker Allan King for Canadian TV, this unflinching look into a home for fucked-up kids was immediately censored by its backers and resulted in a government-sponsored raid on the eponymous institution. It's no wonder '60s audiences were freaked out. The alleged healing technique used by Warrendale's employees is something called "holding," which consists of goading the kids into seizure-like fits and then hanging onto their arms and legs until they wear themselves out. While much of the shock value has dissipated over the years (bleep out the copious swearing and you've got Jerry Springer's Summer Camp), this film still packs quite a wallop — a landmark that deserves a wider audience.

with the VoG's appearances. This VoG is quite a chatterbox — would it have done to implore her to shut the fuck up for five seconds?

MINDBENDER (1995). A biopic of spoon-bender Uri Geller, filtered through — as the opening credits helpfully inform us — the "Artistic Eye" of Ken Russell, who's got some 'splaining to do! It starts out promisingly, with a young Uri discovering his psychic powers amidst CALIGARI-esque sets, but quickly degenerates into a supremely dopey melodrama set mostly in the late sixties (although little attempt is made at any kind of period detail) with a cast of vacant-eyed 90210 rejects. Uri is taken to America by scientist Terence Stamp (who looks justifiably embarrassed throughout), where he attracts the attention of evil scientists who force him to perform

LE PARTY (1990). In a maximum-security prison, a third rate variety troupe puts on a show for the prisoners — no surprise: things quickly get outta hand. This French Canadian production hits most of the standard prison-movie bases: mini-riots, stabbings, gay blowjobs and even a surreptitious escape. No, it never approaches classics like BRUTE FORCE or SHORT EYES, but it does acquit itself nicely enough (though the "you'll-never-cage-a-man's-soul" bullshit is lathered on a bit too thick). Writer-director Pierre Falardeau (Quebec's answer to Oliver Stone) clearly delights in upsetting middle-class mores, dwelling relentlessly on the sleaziest aspects of the variety act and introducing a smarmy party-sniffing subplot that's sure to alienate quite a few audience members. All the better, methinks!

MILES WOOD; Hong Kong.

CLICK (1990). Looking like an uncompleted film, which somebody tried to make releasable by recalling a couple of the actors for re-shoots (most of the movie looks to have been shot in 35mm but some scenes have a grainy, jerky, quality indicating 16mm at best), CLICK is unsurprisingly, an unholy mess. There's little consistency (even the characters' behavior oscillates wildly) and some expected transitional shots are absent, but the film not only gets away with it (just!) but actually uses its own shortcomings to make what would have probably been strictly routine exploitation fare into something rather more interesting. Part of the credit may be due to Gary Graver (who has directed his fair share of porno under the pseudonym Robert McCallum, but has also lensed some exploitation classics, including SATAN'S SADISTS), one of the two credited cinematographers, and there is much visual inventiveness on display, notably a sex scene, in which both the participants end up as fatalities, shot entirely using a strobe to good effect. The story, which takes a while to assemble, concerns a photographer (played by the film's co-director, DAKTARI's Ross Hagen) whose latest controversial work is to be a calendar mixing glamour and violence (i.e. he snaps sexy-girls-with-guns pictures)! When the crew (Troy Donahue, whose career had slid downward fast after once appearing in major Hollywood films such as A SUMMER PLACE and IMITATION OF LIFE, plays Hagen's assistant) and models assemble at a ranch for a closed shoot a murderer strikes, and there are suspects aplenty. One John Stewart is also credited as director and the cast is rounded out by the likes of Gregory Scott Cummins, Keely Sims and Hoke Howell.

YELLOW EMANUELLE (1976). In the '70s, titles like this were forbidden fruit to teenagers such as myself, offering a seemingly rich exotic and erotic cocktail that, unfairly, only those over the age of 18 could savor. Today, with only a few minor snips, "Il Mondo dei sensi di Emy Wong" could probably play on afternoon television, where it would likely find favor with daytime soap addicts. It's not unlike an update of the sort of tripe that Douglas Sirk used to make, only with a touch of Oriental spice but minus a lot of style. Giuseppe Pambieri is George, an airline pilot who no sooner lands in Hong Kong than he finds himself in the hospital (picturesquely located on the Peak!) after a gang of roughies decide it's they, and not he, who need to know the ins-and-outs of Chinese lovemaking, courtesy of a pretty prostitute. Awakening to the not unwelcome sight of his nurse, Emy Wong (Chai Lee, who five years later ended up as a bit player in FOR YOUR EYES ONLY) George instantly falls in love with his white angel. While naturally this doesn't stop him, on his discharge, from banging a fellow airline employee (Ilona Staller, yes Cicciolina!) and trying to pick up every piece of skirt he sees, when Emy begins to return his feelings he becomes a changed man. First she lures him away from the nightspots to show him "the real Hong Kong" (which is, of course, all the tourist spots!), and eventually forgets her Chinese modesty (not to mention

her prearranged marriage) by sleeping with the guy. The two are soon planning their future together, but when he gets called back to duty, through mischance and misdeed, they lose touch and Emy, believing she's been used and cast aside, goes from doctor to high-class hooker to low-rent street whore faster than George can book a flight back to HK. To say any more would spoil the "fun", and while those hungry for dollops of Asian sex may be left feeling wanting, fans of kitsch melodrama should lap it up. Director Albert Thomas is actually Adalberto Albertini, who as Ben Norman would direct the unwatchable STARCRAH sequel, ESCAPE FROM GALAXY 3.

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Photographed by William Brayne, Edited by Russel Heise
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RENTED LIPS (1987). If you ever wondered how Robert Downey Jr. got so screwed up then maybe taking a look at some of his old man's movies might provide a few answers. Martin Mull (who also penned the screenplay) stars as a dedicated documentary filmmaker (whose resume includes the likes of "Lincoln: The Car, the Man, The Tunnel") who refuses to sell out. He's also never had a proper job and is still a virgin: "When are you going to learn there is more to life than making movies? Where is Mrs. Filmmaker?" screams his mother (LOST IN SPACE's June Lockhart). Mull gets the chance when he and his trusty cameraman (Dick Shawn) get hired to finish off "an art film dealing with sexual fantasies in Nazi Germany" after the original director has been murdered by a sleazy minister-cum-porno-merchant (Kenneth Mars). When Mull and Shawn arrive on-set they find a cast straight out of a Fellini dream sequence, and when Mull meets wannabe-singer Jennifer Tilly he's inspired to turn the sex-pic into "Halloween at the Bunker - A Musical" while in the afternoons he uses the same cast (including Robert Downey Jr., as Wolf Dangler, who parades around the entire film in Nazi regalia minus his trousers!) to lens his own project about "Indian farming techniques in Orange County". Quite how Mull dreamed up RENTED LIPS is anyone's guess. There are a few in-jokes and a smattering of humor ("Is it straight or bi?" Edy Williams asks, when Mull announces his idea to make a film about farming techniques) but THE PRODUCERS this ain't, and by the time the audience stand up and applaud at the film's end you certainly won't be sharing their enthusiasm, for the novelty will have long worn off.

FIRE IN THE FLESH [Le Feu Sous La Peau] (1985). Gerard Kikoine is best known for his stylized version of "Jekyll and Hyde" starring Anthony Perkins, EDGE OF SANITY, but for most of his career he's been churning out high class erotica such as this adaptation of Dominique Labarriere's novel "Le Diable au Soleil". After scoring an A-grade for his lazy classmate Alexis by seducing his teacher, Raphael (Kevin Bernhardt) accepts an invite to spend his vacation with Alexis' family at their grand country mansion. On his first day there he screws Alexis' mother (Eva Cemerys) in the barn, then proceeds to seduce his girlfriend (Marie Bossee) after giving her a ride home when Alexis is too drunk to drive (he then dumps her, leaving her to walk home!), and his crippled elder sister (Lydie Denier), and takes indecent photos of his younger virginal sister (Veronique Beguin). With the mother completely under his spell Raphael humiliates her by giving her to the garbage collectors and then, knowing she's watching, seducing her husband. Of course, by this time the b&w flashbacks have hinted there's a reason for all this, and when revealed it comes as no great surprise though it does make one of his actions (which we thankfully do not get to see) all the more shocking. Kikoine's approach — employing some exaggerated perspectives and oblique camera angles — is more suited to the material than it was to his version of the Stevenson story, and is enough to make one curious about his other earlier work.

GREG WALTERS; Tucson, AZ.

MANIA (1987). Andrea Bianchi directed one of my favorite Italian horror films, BURIAL GROUND and also many other productions, including some porno. He also made two films for the grade-Z French studio of Eurocine: ANGEL OF DEATH, which is the more well known, and this horror film, which was never released in the United States. Bo Svenson plays a count, who leads a satanic cult that kidnaps young girls and imprisons them in a cave. The authorities suspect a professor, played by a worn out looking Chuck Connors is involved also. Bodies of girls start to appear in his lab. He is eventually proven to be innocent because the killer is revealed to be Robert Ginty, who is the husband of one of Svenson's sect members. Unlike most Eurocine productions this looks like a real movie, with barely, if any, stock footage and real actors for a change; albeit stars on the downside of their careers.

ONE STEP AWAY (1968). The wildest hippy movie ever!!! A visit to a West Coast commune details their everyday life. Of course, drug-taking seems to take up most of that time. 18-month kids are shown smoking joints and an especially insightful parent opines "Never give a child acid until he's eight, and then only if he or she asks first." Directors David Newman and Ed Picus adopt the pseudo-documentary approach which only adds to the overall hilarity. The Hallucinations provide some truly awful fuzz guitar instrumentals for a semblance of a soundtrack.

THE MAN WHO LAUGHS (1965). A remake of the classic 1928 Universal silent film. This version stars Jean Sorel (BELLE DE JOUR) as the title man whose face is permanently fixed into a grotesque smile. This Italian-French co-production also adds elements of the FACE BEHIND THE MASK as Sorel makes a realistic facemask to hide his distorted features. Director Sergio Corbucci was one of the better Spaghetti Western directors and this interesting rarity is one of his few horror or fantasy films. Of note is cinematographer Enzo Barboni, who went on to lens many of Corbucci's Westerns and eventually gravitated to directing himself, most notably the films starring Terence Hill and Bud Spencer under the pseudonym of E.B. Clucher.

HARLOT (1971). A good example of the early L.A. hardcore film, pioneered as it was by producer Bill Osco and directors Mike Light and Howard Zeim with the groundbreaking MONA. Sandwiched as it is between the aforemen-

tioned MONA and FLESH GORDON, it deserves to be as well known as the other two. A 15-year-old high school girl has various sex adventures with fellow students and faculty. She ends up hooking for a living, including taking a john up to the top of the L.A. Federal bank building for a quickie. With some good looking women, especially Fran Spector as the underage looking title slut.

LE VADOU (1972). The French have never made many Mondo movies, and the few that were made are of the sexy variety. This documentary on voodoo practices in the African country of Dahomey, now known as Benin, is pretty wild in spots. Highlights are a blood drinking ceremony, in which a pig is gutted and bled, while native dancers spastically writhe away. The blood is passed around and drank, while a priest babbles incessantly in the native tongue. I don't know how director Jean-Pierre Magneron was able to film this sequence, but it's pretty amazing. This would make a good triple bill with THE SERPENT AND THE RAINBOW and ANGEL HEART for the contrasting depictions of voodoo ceremonies around the world.

DRIES VERMEULEN; Belgium.

DEDICATO AL MARE EGEO [a.k.a. Dedicated to the Aegean Sea; Twisted Passion] (1978). Most historical accounts of carnal cinema tend to overlook this mesmerizing Japanese-Italian

co-production, so I was grateful to see it covered to some extent in the Weissers' JAPANESE CINEMA ENCYCLOPEDIA: THE SEX FILMS. Celebrated Nippon author Masuo Ikeda never took another shot at filmmaking after local censors cut his cinematic firstborn to ribbons, eliminating over half an hour of footage, rendering the narrative completely disjointed as a result. A complete version did receive a scattershot release in several European countries though. I bet that pretty much anyone who has ever had the good fortune to see it never forgot about it either. Using the staggeringly photogenic scenery of the Greek Isles as a backdrop, Ikeda tells the tale of handsome womanizing art student Claudio Alliotti who sleeps with his unhappy, divorced landlady Olga Karlatos (Mrs. One Eye from Fulci's ZOMBI 2) and also turns out to be the object of her retarded teenage daughter's less than healthy obsession. Matters take a turn for the worse when our skirt-chasing antihero is picked up by a pair of horny Scandinavian tourists, one of whom is played by a youthfully glowing pre-Cicciolina Ilona Staller, burning up the screen in a monumentally teasing Sapphic encounter with her Brunette cohort. Karlatos grows jealously possessive (and starts charging Claudio for the room, one assumes!) but it's her kid — indelibly portrayed by young

BILL OSCO GAVE YOU "MONA"... A HARD ACT TO FOLLOW.
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Sandra Dobri — who effectuates the tragic denouement. Dripping with atmosphere, enhanced by a hauntingly plaintive Ennio Morricone score, this is a frequently disturbing mood piece ready for revival.

EUGENIE, HISTORIA DE UNA PERVERSION [Erotismo] (1980). Personally, I've always considered this Jess Franco's finest hour. Okay, considering some of the competition (SHINING SEX, anyone?), that may not be saying much. I happen to like the old Spaniard's enthusiasm for cinema though, literally at all costs, even if final results are often found wanting. Franco had of course adapted de Sade before (this is liberally adapted from his *Philosophy of the Boudoir*) but this time actually managed to strike a near-perfect balance between the sensual and the shocking, due in no small part to Juan Soler's striking camerawork. German sex starlet and subsequent TV-personality Katja Bienert was barely (!) 18 when she was cast in the perpetually unclothed lead as Eugenie, spoilt brat daughter of incestuously inclined diplomat Erwin Tanner (Tony Squios). Their unhealthy if unconsummated relationship is mirrored in that of Alba and Alberto de Rosa (Mabel Escano and Antonio Mayans), an aristocratic pair of siblings who've obviously already taken their mutual attraction several steps further. An oppressively claustrophobic mood permeates the film once Eugenie and her dad are lured into the hidden world of their newfound friends. A violent if impeccably stylish climax seems Franco's attempt to emulate Peckinpah.

And yet, this flick's most memorable image remains that of the sand sculptures in the opening scene, perhaps a monument to the de Rosas' past victims, eternally frozen in the positions they died in.

THE SWITCH...OR HOW TO ALTER YOUR EGO! (1974). Joe Sarno was the greatest non-explicit adult filmmaker working throughout the '60s and '70s and this routinely overlooked little gem goes a long way to prove it. Essentially a sexed-up retelling of the famous Jekyll and Hyde story, THE SWITCH benefits greatly from a genuinely rib-tickling performance by exquisite blonde Rebecca Brooke (real name: Mary Mendum, though billed here as Veronica Parrish for some unfathomable reason) as a mousy female scientist who accidentally discovers a potion that turns her into an irresistible (not to mention insatiable) seductress. Shot as professionally as any Hollywood studio pic of

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not just another woman

Starring DON ALLEN, DARBY LLOYD RAINS
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not yet encompass his '70s output. Rebecca Brooke shines as the titular Laura, bored wife of archeologist Eric Edwards, suspecting him of carrying on an affair with his assistant Katja von Graff a/k/a Kristine Heller, the man-eating rock star from Alex deRenzy's *BABY FACE* (1977). Ironically, it's her jealousy that drives them to consummate their mutual attraction in this surprisingly thoughtful nudie with occasionally ponderous dialogue (Laura likening erstwhile lesbo lover Honey to Peter Pan, refusing to grow up) and a carefree European ambiance. The foxy female flesh on display certainly doesn't hurt matters either. You've gotta love a movie that gets to have it both ways.

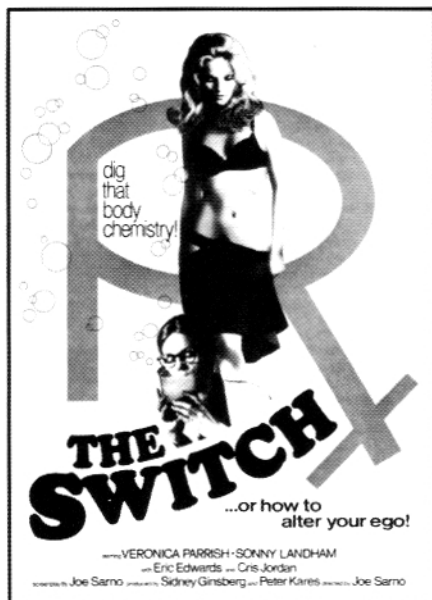
NOT JUST ANOTHER WOMAN (1974). Unlike Sam Weston's religiously inspired XXX-flick *AN ACT OF CONFESSION* (1972) which was briefly available from Alpha Blue Archives, this one never seems to have made it on video. Quite a shame really, as it's an often beautifully shot and decently acted (especially by Darby Lloyd Rains) sex drama about a swinging married couple (Darby and tattooed Don Allen) who go through a crisis when the woman's sister (the late Tina Russell), who really is a Sister (Sister Conception in fact), comes to stay and the husband starts getting ideas of introducing this Bride of Christ to their regular group gropes. A rare foray into hetero hardcore for noted gay porn filmmaker Toby Ross (*CRUISIN' 57*, *SCHOOLMATES*), this turned up on at least three

occasions at my local grindhouse (now sadly converted to a Savings & Loan) throughout the first half of the '80s. What I remember most about it are its lushly photographed fantasy sequences, including such warped delights as Marc Stevens employing a Samurai sword to slice a zucchini precariously perched on a naked nun's throat and Tina leering down from a crucifix. Great downer ending too as Allen dies in a car crash on his way to defiling Russell, struck down by the hand of God so to speak!

VINCENT CONSERVA; Garden City, NY.

ROBBERY (1967). "26 men took 25 minutes to steal \$10,000,000" read the movie posters, with every word true. *ROBBERY* tells the story of the largest heist in English history. It also served as the blue print for one of the best caper films of all time. This is a fast-paced and methodical study of professional thieves and their preparation for a takeover of a night mail train, destined for London. There are some nice action sequences throughout. We open with a corker of a car chase, snaking in and out of London, that is really tense. In fact, it's said that after viewed said chase, Steve McQueen searched out director Peter Yates, because he wanted the same results for his next picture's automotive thrills. That film was *BULLITT*, and Yates did indeed get the gig. As for this film, the actual takeover of the train is nothing less than brilliant, while the editing and pace are nail biting, even if you know the results of the real event. The always great Stanley Baker stars and co-produced this masterpiece. Also, we have some of the best character actors of the time, including James Booth (*ZULU*, also with Baker), Frank Finley, Barry Foster, William Marlowe, and Clinton Grevin, while Joanna Pettet is Baker's distraught but faithful wife. The 113-minute running time will seem like the blink of an eye. It's *that* good!

BORDER COP [a.k.a. The Border; The Blood Barrier] (1979). In 1980 Charles Bronson starred in *BORDERLINE*, Jack Nicholson was in 1982's *THE BORDER*, while Telly Savalas headlined in the barely released *BORDER COP*, which aired on cable television in the late '80s...The south-of-the-border sub-genre always deals with three things, (1) corruption, (2) illegal aliens and (3) one good cop. This picture is no different. Telly plays Cooper, a straight arrow peace officer who's seven months away from retirement. His only interest in life is his young friend Benny (Danny De La Paz) who he has known since he was a boy, and Benny's new bride Leina. Other than this pair Cooper is a loner. Unknown to Cooper, and against Leina's pleas, Benny



accepts a job from the local "wetback" merchant Suaraz (played by raspy Michael V. Gazzo, with a ponytail!). Agreeing to lead some illegals to one of Suaraz's connections, Benny does this so Leina and he can get money to start a new life. Of course, things don't go too smooth. The connection turns out to be a slaughterhouse and a young boy has a few buckets of cow blood poured on him (you know, to amuse the foreman). Benny raises hell, word gets back to Suaraz, who, being the nice guy that he is, rapes Leina while chanting "You're so young, you're so young." Meanwhile, Cooper is being browbeat by his supervisor Moffat (Eddie Albert), and the picture climaxes at Suaraz's estate with some vigilante-style justice. Directed by Christopher Leitch (TEEN WOLF TOO), the film is fast-paced and well acted by all involved. There are a few well-staged action scenes as well, including a bar

fight that was positively brutal. Only a couple of complaints — one is that Cooper shows up a couple of times at heated points for no apparent reason. Does he have ESP? Also, you don't have to be El Santo to figure out who the dirty cop is. To most people, Telly Savalas was the lollipop cop Kojak, but he was also one of the most interesting and hard-working character actors of the '60s and '70s, with THE ASSASSINATION BUREAU, KELLY'S HEROES, PRETTY MAIDS ALL IN A ROW, and the list goes on and on. Almost always genre roles too. BORDER COP isn't a classic, but it's definitely worth a viewing.

DARK OF THE SUN (1967). In one of the first films to deal with modern mercenaries, Rod Taylor plays Curry, a soldier of fortune leader hired in the 1964 Congo. His mission: Take a train 300 miles into Simba rebel-territory to recover \$50 million in uncut diamonds. Curry is in this for the paycheck, but partner Ruffo (Jim Brown) has a purpose — he wants his homeland free. Along for the ride is Doctor Wreid (Kenneth More), soaked to the bone in scotch; Henlein (Peter Carsten) is an ex-Nazi who still wears his swastika (we know he's real bad because he kills two children 15 minutes into the picture); while Claire (Yvette Mimieux) is stranded in the jungle and rants about the Simbas. Meanwhile, Curry leads his troop through one deadly mishap after another, to finally possess the diamonds, but there's a price to pay. Curry's only friend, Ruffo, is killed by the maniacal Henlein, which has Curry pondering his motives — oh yeah, that's after he stabs Henlein about 47 times! This is a fantastic picture! The plot is set up in the first 15 minutes, and from then on, it's non-stop, ball-to-the-walls action! There's even a chainsaw dual between Taylor and Carsten!...1967 started to up the ante with violence in Major Motion Pictures (case in point, BONNIE AND CLYDE), but for some inexplicable reason DARK OF THE SUN is never given the kudos it deserves in this particular chapter of action-cinema history. Let me be blunt: This movie is brutal! The carnage highlight comes when Curry and Ruffo sneak into a village that has been overrun by rebels. Who says the Simbas don't know how to have a good time? We get burning torches in the face, draggings by chain and motorcycle, and even nuns aren't immune to the savagery. Oh yeah, one of Curry's men is also the unfortunate recipient of a gang rape — and this is five years before DELIVERENCE! This all happens before Taylor and Brown kill just about anything that moves or breathes, and speaking of Brown, he barely gives the film a mention in his 1989 autobiography OUT OF BOUNDS, which is a shame because this is one of his stand-out perfs. Directed by Jack Cardiff, this is a must-see '60s excursion into blood and guts. Note: Peter Carsten had some of his dialogue dubbed by veteran voice artist Paul Frees. Add'l note: Blaxploitation fave Calvin Lockhart has a small role as a political leader, and has charisma to burn.

THE PROUD AND THE DAMNED (1972). This picture has elements of THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN, THE WILD BUNCH and A FISTFUL OF DOLLARS. Is it as good as any of these classics? No. However it's not without its merits. Chuck Connors plays Will Hansen, a former Confederate on the run. Along the dusty trail we meet four other ex-rebels, including Ike (Aron Kincaid),

who're following Will and his quest for gold. The boys end up south-of-the-border where they meet The General and agree to do some advance scouting of a village. Of course, everything goes wrong. Once at the village, the boys meet Senor (Cesar Romero), but instead of getting The General's info, they start to fall for the sleepy village. Tough-as-nails Hansen becomes smitten with a gypsy girl, while Ike goes cross-eyed for a maiden living in a convent. Before you can say "Seven Samurai," our good ol' boys decide to pass on their agreement with The General and defend the village (after a rather surprising twist in the story). The final showdown ensues, the bodies start to fall, and the nice thing about this predictable little oater is that it's actually not predictable at all...Usually original tunes in a 'B' picture spell trouble — as in get the earplugs! — however THE PROUD AND THE DAMNED's little ditties

were actually pretty good, performed by Henry Capps and Smokey Robards, two of the film's leads! Another interesting point is that except for Connors, Kincaid and Romero, everyone in the cast is making their film debut. Speaking of Kincaid, it's strange seeing him in something besides A.I.P. beach pictures (note: he now does voice-overs for Warner Bros. BATMAN cartoons). Produced, written and directed by Ferde Grofe Jr., this gritty little picture is somewhat proud, but certainly not damned.

GERARD ALEXANDER; Australia.
THE REINCARNATION OF JULIAN [a.k.a. The Reincarnate] (1971). This Canadian film truly belongs to Jack Creley (VIDEO-DROME). As Everett Julian, a lawyer with only a couple of weeks to live, he decides to put into effect all that he has studied about reincarnation. According to a group known as the Sekana, one must first find a suitable host for one's soul before dying. The host will inherit all the knowledge of the dead person and continue the process at the host's time to meet his maker. Jay Reynolds is David Payne, a talented young sculptor chosen to be the host. At an arranged meeting, Julian promises Payne a world of creativity, once he accepts his soul into Payne's body. Julian's many connections assist Payne's career and the only stumbling block seems to be a little thing called a virgin sacrifice...Ruthie, the girl picked for the job, is getting into the Sekana scene anyway, attending their meetings every week. As played by Trudy Young, you couldn't see it happen to a nicer kid. Directed by Don Haldane, who shot a stack of industrial films in the '50s, this movie could be

used as a manual on Sekana beliefs. Jack Creley gives the film the maximum credibility possible, but he's still stuck with a wordy tract. Seeleg Lester, brainchild of some of the classic PERRY MASON and OUTER LIMITS scripts of the '60s, here falls back on such hoary cliches as the bad luck black cat, present to aid the cause of Sekana. Not really an exploitation film, this understandably fell between the cracks of film distribution and has only found its new life thanks to the god of video.

KISS MY BLOOD (1998). I'll admit from the outset that I like vampire flicks. So when I get a chance to check out a new German example of the genre, I get excited. I'd never heard of director David Jazay, but that didn't matter. Give the guy a break, right? As we are assailed by a mixture of techno and Arabic music, we meet Celina, a 691-year-old vampire in a teen's body, played by blonde Aaya Fischer. She's being pursued by The Inspector, a vampire hunter, portrayed by Thomas Haydn. The Inspector has a stake launcher as his prime weapon and a cadre of anti-vampire commandos to assist him. We also meet Jane and John, the wifebeater. They have been together for 3 years of hell. Jane, meekly played by Nadja Reiger, wants a change of life. When the couple advertise for a boarder, who should they get but Celina, our featured vamp. Jane gets some emotional support from Celina, who, in a fit of hunger, kills her latest victim at Jane's apartment. Jane is shocked but inspired by this radical lifestyle change. She too wants to become a vampire but Celina wants to show her the ropes before she makes up her mind. This is the point when the film starts to get schlocky. Montages of Jane and Celina trying out coffins, going to discos and being chased



through a Black Mass do nothing to alleviate the hackneyed predictability of it all. The focus seems to shift from gothic to slapstick without any positive results. It does have the necessary bloodshed/nudity *de rigeur* for a vampire flick, but it lacks conviction, and that is its greatest disappointment.

THE HOLE (1997). Director Tsai Ming Liang (REBELS OF THE NEON GOD) delivers a refreshingly quirky tale set in Taiwan, seven days before the end of the millennium. In what is essentially a two-character play, Yang Kuei-Mei and Lee Kang-Sheng shine as the miserable occupants of an apartment block destined for quarantine. A TV voice-over tells us that "the end of millennium virus" has affected many towns in Taiwan. Garbage collectors refuse to service the afflicted suburbs. Cockroaches are suspected carriers. The Government further advises people who are living in those areas to evacuate, as the water supply will be cut off in seven days. All the while, rain pours over the cities in an unrelenting torrent. The sound of rain occupies the entire film. Lee, who lives below Yang (neither actor is given a character name), complains to her building manager of a leak from above, which is flooding her bathroom. A plumber arrives at Yang's apartment to repair the pipes, but leaves a hole in the middle of the floor. Lee tries to repair her peeling wallpaper to no avail. Yang gets stuck in the one lift as Lee imagines herself a calypso singer in the other! Nauseated by his lift experience, Yang pukes into the hole, covering Lee's furniture with vomit. Eventually, Yang starts peeping into Lee's apartment, which resembles a pigsty as Lee loses the will to fight the deluge. She begins to fantasize about Yang and her singing increases. Truly, a one-of-a-kind feature that rewards those with a need for unusual filmmaking.

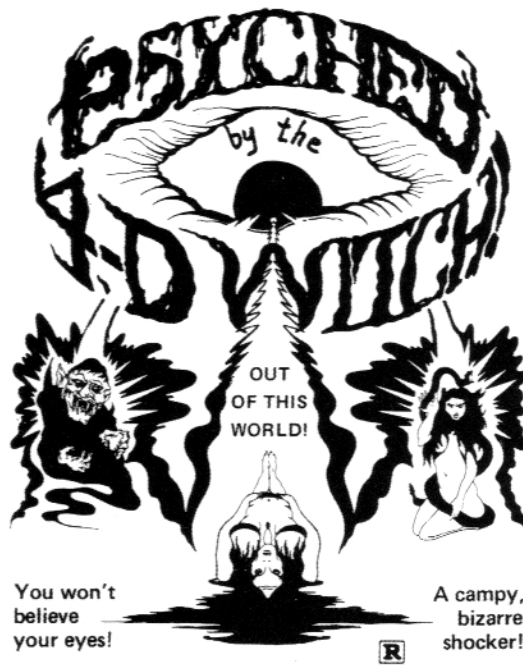
PAUL FREITAG; Chicago, IL.

ELECTRAWOMAN AND DYNAGIRL VS. GLITTER ROCK (1977). Despite the fact that I grew up at the right time, I couldn't really care less about most of Sid & Marty Krofft's output. I do have a special place in my heart, however, for ELECTRAWOMAN AND DYNAGIRL, a distaff BATMAN rip-off starring future soap-mainstay Diedre Hall and Judy Strangis and lacking any of the Adam West series' high budget or quiet subtlety. Of special interest was this episode, not only because



"Far out" and "heavy" a lot, just to show how out-of-it the Kroffts were when they tried to be hip) plot to steal the key, and after the Prince is hypnotized by Glitter Rock's "evil concert" (and, no doubt, the jaw-dropping pseudo-psychedelic editing that mostly involves Glitter Rock's head rotating around the screen), it's up to our heroes to get the key back. After DynaGirl explains

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GET SET TO BE



fact that she intends to prove wrong. It seems she'd always been fascinated by witchcraft, performing candlelight rituals "which sometimes goes on for hours" with topless Cindy moving Candles up and down and looking around aimlessly. Anyway, one day a strange voice introducing herself as Abigail (possibly an ancestor) speaks out of the ethers (Cindy with a deeper voice) and tells her how to get an orgasm. After a spell is cast, the magic words "let's fantasy-fuck now" (spoken by Abigail once a week at various times) will cause fantastic sex. Amazingly, this spell even keeps her cherry unpopped, as she's concerned about "remaining a virgin for daddy(!)" The first time the words are spoken (well, some of them... the "fuck" gets edited out on subsequent occasions) she masturbates with lots of red lights and reverse-filmed fireworks in the background. The second time it takes her to the presence of her neighbor, Mr. Jones, who responds with a mincing "Go peddle your sex somewhere else, I'm a homo!" But after Abigail turns up her "magnetic field power," she manages to seduce him anyway, and later seems to win him over to girls entirely. She later seduces her aunt, a woman with a Mae West voice (though it's obviously still Cindy) who claims "I'd never have guessed you were such a sexy wench." After she watches her best friend have sex with a snake, she begins to suspect something weird is going on after being forced to go necrophile. At this point, the movie inexplicably switches to Cindy's brother (at least it's a different voice) who hallucinates, goes to Chinatown, pets a monkey and seems to be okay. Abigail takes revenge on Cindy by turning him into the king of the sex vampires. There's no sync sound, so the narration, along with a seemingly endless number of reprises of the title track (by Johnny By The Way) is all you've got on the audio side. Making matters more awkward are edits of the profanity — with all this sex going on, who'd object to the occasional body part being vocalized? Directed by Victor Luminera, the sex itself is pretty silly stuff, edited in with loads of, er, "Transetheric Vision." For those looking for an acid-induced sex flick that's slightly less coherent than Ray Dennis Steckler at his worst, this is a must-see.

FEEL THE MOTION [Der Formel Eins Film] (1985). While new wave music was popular in the US, and it was placed on just about every Brat Pack movie in the '80s, its stars never directly inspired any major films of their own. The same can't be said for Germany, which brought out this hard-to-believe cinematic exercise in bad hair based on the popular TV show DER FORMUL EINS SHOW (THE FORMULA ONE SHOW) and directed by Wolfgang Buld. After our mechanic heroine Tina (Sissy Kelling, who starts out the film with a nude shower scene) tries to get her demo tape to the execs at a television studio in the process of recording a seemingly endless number of music videos (including numbers for the Flirts, Katrina and the Waves, and Limahl), she accidentally hands off her tape to Jimmy, a small tier lackey while standing in for a Flirts video. Depressed, she goes home, but runs into a sleazy pro-

ducer (being followed by comic villains played by Der Toten Hosen), who invites her over. She and her friend quickly realize it's a swinger's pad and inadvertently blow everything up. Meanwhile, the small tier lackey is on a quest to find Tina in an attempt to become her love interest. He accidentally douses Tina with water and Meat Loaf does her hair. Der Toten Hosen play (in surf gear), and Meat Loaf performs one of his endless forgettable ballads ("A Piece of the Action"). Tina eventually gets a job as a gopher, and her first major gig is escorting Falco from the airport to the studio. For the record, Falco (who kind of looks like Bruce Campbell) does perform "Rock Me Amadeus." Jimmy, however, gets forced into spoiling Pia Zadora's video because of the money he owes to the sleazy producer. Pia, by the way, does "My Little Bit of Heaven" from VOYAGE OF THE ROCK ALIENS, this time with four shabbily-dressed mechanics. We also get a sub-plot about Tina's beau trying to avoid the draft (he doesn't, and the film ends with a zany escape from the army). Tina's tape getting burned in a toaster, and Tina's father becoming increasingly computer-obsessed, and at one point, being used as a wig model. The dumb plot and silly dubbing is all pretty excruciating, but the frequent musical numbers (despite their low billing, it's Der Toten Hosen's show, and they get the most screen time and scenery shredding) keep the pace up. Sure, it's crap, but at least it's bad German '80s new wave crap, so that's something different. The cast also includes Kurt Raab from several Fassbinder films.

HYSTERIA (1996). Rene Daalder will always be an appreciated filmmaker of mine, if solely for his 1976 exploitation classic MASSACRE AT CENTRAL HIGH. Tragically, only one of his later films (1995's HABITAT) have been released in the States. Given the work of his I've seen, he comes off as a Canadian equivalent to Larry Cohen, a clever writer with some good ideas that don't always work out in the execution. The film opens with a psychiatrist escaping from an informally-run psychiatric facility headed by crazed genius Patrick McGooohan. After the loose shrink gets into a car accident because of the voices in his head, the action switches to his peer (Shakespearean thesp Michael Maloney), who's trying to find a place for the schizophrenic Veronica (Emmanuelle Vaugier) to stay after the free clinic he works in shuts down. Convinced McGooohan's clinic is the only refuge, the pair take it on the lam, but it's really just a set-up for the clinic's new owner to investigate the place and rescue his son from what he considers to be a cult. Lost yet? Don't worry, you will be. After a brief picnic lunch that causes Veronica to see ants on her body, rip off her clothes, run into a lake and almost stab Maloney in the eye with a corkscrew, they arrive at the home where the rest of the movie takes place. McGooohan welcomes them with open arms, quickly establishing himself as a psychiatric Charlie Chan with dialogue like "Delusions should be cultivated like mushrooms — shed too much light on them, and they crawl back into the woodwork." He tells Maloney about his theory of maintaining a universal consciousness and soon performs surgery on Veronica, allowing her to share in the thoughts of the rest of the group. The group includes the clinic owner's son (who's there of his own free will, after his parents sent him there because he stutters!), a butch Tourette's Syndrome victim who speaks in rhyme, a pianist with two separate minds living in each of his arms, and, best of all, Amanda Plummer as a wheelchair-bound dance enthusiast who turns a group session into a bizarre interpretive dance number that wouldn't look out of place in DR. CALIGARI. The meandering, all-over-the-place plot and stagy dialogue are typical of Daalder's other work, but there's a definite sense of oddball perversity at work here. Blending bits of FREAKS, ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST and DISTURBED, the film's weirdness climaxes (literally) with a montage of virtually everyone at the asylum having sex (straight, gay, solo, and chained to a table in leather garb) as Plummer dances around gleefully in her wheelchair. McGooohan turns in such a fine performance and makes a great creepy-yet-oddly-likable mad doc that it's not surprising that Maloney's hero is pretty bland. It doesn't matter, though, because there's enough curiosity value in HYSTERIA without an engaging lead to make it worth a look.

ANDREW M. COPP; Dayton, Ohio.

KIDNAPPED CO-ED [a.k.a. Date With a Kidnapper; House of Terror] (1978). Packaged on the same double feature tape as the turd HITCHHIKE TO HELL, this impressive little movie by director Frederick R. Fridel comes off almost as a mini grindhouse classic, beginning when a dude kidnaps a bespectacled co-ed as she leaves prep school. He makes his demands over the phone to her literally absent parents (we never see them, they are always out of frame) and then sets himself and his refugee up in a flea bag hotel to wait for the ransom. Before they can even kill a roach, several thugs bust in. The girl thinks they are there to help her, but instead they decide to steal her virginity. The following scene has the kidnapper tied at gunpoint and forced to watch as the other thug violates his girl. He struggles to get loose and finally does so because all the blood from his torn wrists slicks the ropes down enough to slip out. He promptly kills the scumfuck; they then take off into the wasteland known as America and meet violent rednecks, more thieves, a blind Samaritan who could give a shit about their plight, and a psychotic farmer with a big pitchfork and catatonic daughter. It is these scenes when the

movie lifts the rock of America and focuses on the critters that live beneath. This is the outskirts of society on display, and for the most part pretty entertaining in a grim sort of way. Naturally the both of them succumb to the "Stockholm syndrome," but as we learn about his nasty fucked-up past we realize that they make a pretty decent couple. This is David Lynch on a three-dollar budget. I'm sure drive-in audiences were quite pleased with this dark gem. It is sleaze to please.

THE REDEEMER [a.k.a. Son of Satan; Class Reunion Massacre] (1976). Once upon a time a little kid came walking out of a lake. His clothes were dry in a record amount of time. He rode a bus to see a man who may be a Priest. He magically gives this man an extra thumb. Why? You got me! Flash (Forward?) to a priest residing over a school full of punk ass kids, including one who pulls a knife on the local whipping boy just for kicks. Flash (Back? Forward? Fuck, I dunno!) to an old man getting killed and his face cast by an unseen stranger. Flash (Sideways?) to several people the stranger went to school with and a current example of their "sins" (infidelity, gambling and the worst, LESBIANISM! NOOOOOOO!!!). Then the real action starts with each of them arriving at the faux class reunion and getting bumped off in creative and bloody ways. But why does the killer have an extra thumb? Okay, this movie is a mess; all the structural flaws makes viewing it like putting together a jigsaw puzzle that's missing pieces. But it is also fun in a brain-draining sort of way. Nothing makes any real sense, yet one gets the feeling director Constantine S. Gochis was really serious about all of this. It is this urgency that makes the movie work in spite of the flaws. There is a mythology at work here, not a coherent one, but a myth just the same. The boy from the lake is some sort of divine messenger sent to create "the redeemer"

who will go about punishing the "Sinners" of the world. Even though I'm not sure the sins in question deserve death, and I have no idea why an extra thumb would be needed to do so. On the upside, this is really well shot and edited, at least visually. The cutting between the preparations for the reunion and the examples of the "Sins" is very enticing, as is the extreme gore quotient. Okay, so it's incoherent and muddled, but very entertaining anyway.

VIOLENT PROTECTION (1972). Cannibal boy Umberto Lenzi's rather communist approach to the cop thriller genre is actually pretty entertaining. At least once you get past the disturbing pro-police brutality angle. Wanna be a good cop? Beat the shit out of everybody! The story is far too complex to go into, with multiple bad guys, extortion, robberies, and rub-outs. But our hero handles it all the same way; beat the holy snot out of anybody even remotely connected to a case. Really violent, but not that gory (though there are two rub-outs involving a bowling bowl and a spiked fence that are sure to win your approval). I found this to be loads of vicious fun, though I seriously doubt the Italian crime film will ever become the flavor of the moment like Hong Kong cinema has. These films are simply too grim and dated to have much mass appeal. So sit back, relax and enjoy some hard ass police brutality in the safety of your own home. Best of all, you won't feel like a poseur!



TOM FITZGERALD; San Francisco, CA. FUTZ (1969). Here's a quintessential example of the kind of movie that could only have been made in the late '60s, and as far as I know it's the only musical about a pigfucker. It's based on the controversial off-Broadway hit and performed by the La Mama Repertory Theatre and although its setting is your average small farming community, the town folk are anything but normal. We first see them doing some weirdo musical review, standing on their heads, spouting nonsense and such. But Futz, the local outcast who's makin' bacon with his hog, is too much for even them. And when the village idiot rapes a girl, the town blames Futz for corrupting him, so they lock him up and later an angry mob rushes the jail to attack him. The mob burns down his farm, stabs his pig and eventually torture and kill Futz in the feverish, bloody apocalyptic finale. It's an intense, effective crescendo especially after all the goofiness that proceeds it. The whole affair is sopping with prententious, overwrought theatrics and all the avant garde tics and tricks like slo-mo freakouts and solarized nude group gropes. Look out for early appearances by Frederick Forrest and Sally Kirkland seen nude riding a pig. You can imagine all involved wanted to make a Big Statement about demonization and tolerance for otherness, but ultimately this oddball effort is just another noggin'-scratching curio from a long gone era.

TOOMORROW (1970). After helping to create the Monkees, shlockmeister Don Kirshner turned to the concept of sci-fi hijinks with a new prefab group called Toomorrow, featuring a teen Olivia Newton John seen here in her Marsha Brady best. The project didn't take off and all that remains is one flop album and this artifact of bubble gum pop kitsch that plays like a live action version of Josie and the Pussycats. The flimsy plot concerns extraterrestrials, the Alphoids, who have found that this band's sub-Archies drivel, especially



their electronic keyboard "the Tonaliser", sends positive vibes that will help their species survive. This is the only flick know in which an analog synthesizer can save a planet. An alien representative tries to recruit them to play on their planet, but the group resists, deciding to perform on Earth and beam their galactic groove to the heavens. Mingled in all this fluff, is a trite stab at a topical theme with a subplot about campus unrest. The whole time I wished Sun Ra would swoop down and cosmically annihilate these geezers.

GUESS WHAT WE LEARNED IN SCHOOL TODAY? (1970). At about the same time he was making the generation gap classic JOE, John Avildsen helmed this social satire about a small suburban town's reaction to sex education coming to their school. It's presented as a production made in co-operation with the "Institute for Interpersonal Relationships." Throughout we see the well adjusted, articulate Dr. Lily Whitehorn, the Institute's director and the school's prospective sex ed teacher

frankly explaining "the birds & the bees" to some grade school kids like a Mother Goose of all things reproductive. On the other hand, we get broadly drawn archetypes of the Silent Majority, led by a sexist cop and a boozy military guy, who are shown to be hypocritical perverts. Hence, many surprises ensue, as when a morning cup of coffee between their wives turns into a lesbo pot party. Things also take a twist when horny teen son Robbie gets a hand job from his foxy babysitter as she reads him a dirty bedtime story. Later that night, the wives get stoned again, leading to mom and dad fucking while watching their Robbie make it with the neighbor's wife. Weird sequences are peppered throughout to illustrate everybody's fantasies including mom's Oedipal longings and the macho cop's phallic gun visions. Something of a precursor to Avildsen's later suburban black comedy NEIGHBORS (1981), this pic takes some chances, giving it an edge even 30 years later.

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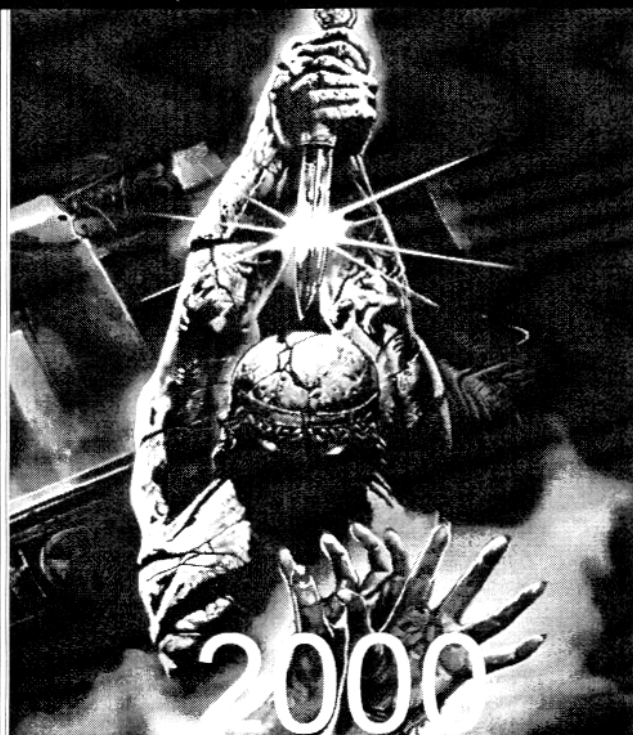
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The Man Behind "THE MACK": An Interview with Director MICHAEL CAMPUS

By STEVE RYFLE

"You wanna know what truth is? Truth is pimples, garlic, and armpits. That's what truth is."

That line, uttered by a corrupt (and very drunk) policeman in *THE MACK* (1973), sums up the films of Michael Campus. As a director, Campus is always searching for some hidden truth, literal or metaphorical. And it usually isn't pretty — like pimples, garlic and armpits.

Campus's gritty style stems from his work during the mid-1960's with acclaimed documentarian John Secondari, and with TV producer David Susskind. At age 34, Campus quit a lucrative career as a CBS executive in New York, convinced a bigwig at Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas to give him \$100,000, and directed his first film, *SURVIVAL* (1970). It was an experiment of sorts — shot almost entirely in a friend's house (except for a few desert scenes), and the dialogue was mostly improvised by the 11-member cast and then laid down, in script form, by writer John D.F. Black (of *SHAFT* fame).

Campus next made *Z.P.G.* (1971), a sci-fi drama about a future society where human reproduction is unlawful, starring Oliver Reed. His other efforts include *THE EDUCATION OF SONNY CARSON* (1974), an acclaimed biopic of an African-American political activist, and *THE PASSOVER PLOT* (1975), starring Zalman King [producer of HBO's *RED SHOE DIARIES*] as Christ, portrayed as a political revolutionary whose crucifixion was a plot against the Roman Empire.

Campus turned to writing and producing in the late 1970's, and his credits include *THE MAN WHO BROKE A THOUSAND CHAINS* (1987) for HBO and the three-hour docu-drama *HIROSHIMA* (1995) for Showtime. Now, in early 2000, he's preparing to direct an indie remake of his best-known film, *THE MACK* (1973). The original is a classic from the Blaxploitation era, a Horatio Alger story of a small-time thief named Goldie (Max Julien) who ascends the underworld ladder to become the biggest pimp in Oakland. But the pimp's ruthlessness brings about his own downfall. With its unblinking view of urban street life and its outlandish fashion (fur coats abound), dialogue ("You know the rules of the game, Pretty Tony. Your bitch just chose me.") and violence (Goldie executes an enemy with dynamite), *THE MACK* is revered by the hip-hop generation, and it remains a cult favorite and a piece of African-American cinema history.

SC: What did you do before becoming a director?

Campus: I had been an executive at the CBS network in New York for three years, my title was director of special programs. I was brought out to California by Universal, because I was very interested at that time in the future of television. I had done over 150 specials for CBS, including some of the

more famous ones: VLADIMIR HOROWITZ: A TELEVISION CONCERT AT CARNEGIE HALL, Hal Holbrook's MARK TWAIN TONIGHT, all those kind of shows. After a year at Universal, I basically decided that I wanted to make the transition to film, because I found myself being drawn more and more into feature films.

I made a film, *SURVIVAL*, which was the story of 12 people sitting around a dinner table in Palm Springs, and they play a game called *Lifeboat*, where everyone has a vote about who gets thrown overboard. Every five minutes, another person would be eliminated, until there were two left. The theme really interested me, and there was no way this could be made for television. It became very clear to me that this would have to be an independent feature film, and so I found some independent financing and made the film. That was my first directing effort.

and I wanted to try it. It was a big turning point for me.

At that time, Harvey Bernhard, who had gotten interested in the subject of *THE MACK*, contacted me and we met. I had started out my career in documentaries, and my instinct was that if you were going to tell the story of *THE MACK*, there was only one way to do it — to go to Oakland, where the film was supposed to take place, and see what it was about. Robert Poole, who wrote the first draft of the script, had been in prison. He had just come out of prison and had been living "the life" in Oakland, he was part of the underworld.

SC: Was he a pimp?

Campus: No, but he was someone who knew that world, and was very, very friendly with people close to the Ward brothers. There were four guys called the Ward brothers who, in many ways, ran Oakland, or ran that world in Oakland. I went up to Oakland, I lived there for three months through the Ward brothers, who had no reason to trust me. They were very smart guys, and the key brother was a guy named Frank Ward. He understood me, and I understood him, and so he opened up all the doors. Everything from how to handle women on the street, to the drug world.

SC: Why was it so important to you that the film be authentic?

Campus: I didn't want it to be this crappy little movie, because my whole career up until that juncture had been fairly prestigious; everything I touched represented quality. I wasn't doing overtly commercial things. First as a documentarian, then as an executive, and then as a director — I felt everything I did had a certain quality to it.

SC: Had Poole written anything else previously?

Campus: No, he was a fresh face. But [his script] was a start, it told you basically what that world was

about. And the experience of those three months was really a turning point. Being there, living there, being under the wing of Frank Ward — there wasn't anything he couldn't do — that was an incredible lesson and, as a result of that, I worked on several drafts of the script with Bobby and with input from several sources, like Richard Pryor, Roger Mosley, Max Julien. But I'd say the biggest credit has to be given to the Ward brothers themselves. They let me meet their girls — their "associates," as they said — and everybody. I went to the Player's Ball, the real one. I went on the picnics with the players. I hung out with them at night. I lived with them, drove around with them, and saw their life, which was a fairly dangerous life.

Much of the time, what was required of me as a writer was to just have a good ear, to really listen to what was being said. For example, sitting in the barbershop with the players, listening to them talk. I



Max Julien and Richard Pryor in *THE MACK*

SURVIVAL was seen by Edgar Bronfman Sr., the head of the Seagrams family, who was obviously the father of Edgar Bronfman Jr., the current head of Universal/MCA. He hired me to do my second film, a theme that interested me very much, called *ZERO POPULATION GROWTH*. Actually it ended up being called *Z.P.G.* when it was released. It was as a result of *SURVIVAL* that I got the second film. And as it happens in the industry, when you're current, people get interested in you. I did *Z.P.G.* for Paramount, but the money came from Seagram's.

So I made the transition from executive to director, which is a very unusual jump. I don't know of anybody else who's made that kind of jump. Normally, people come from either producing or writing into directing, or occasionally from being a d.p. But this was quite an unusual shift, and I guess an audacious one. But I'd seen enough things, I'd been around film all my professional life up until that point,

defy even the William Goldmans and the Robert Townes to make it more authentic. They had a language, a world that was all their own.

SC: Frank Ward died before the film was released, right?

Campus: Frank Ward was shot to death in his car, and it was a real blow, an incredible blow. To this day, no one seems to know who killed him. Somebody just opened up the back door of his car, he was sitting in the back seat, and blasted him. He never had a chance. I thought about it many times, because when I was hanging around with him it was not unusual for me to ride around with him all night.

SC: How did your documentary background influence the making of THE MACK?

Campus: I had gone around the world several times for ABC as a documentarian. You have to learn to blend in and be part of what's happening — not to be the story yourself, but to let the story tell itself. So, when I finished those three months in Oakland I came back to Los Angeles and worked until the script was in the right shape. And then, once Harvey and I had gotten a cast that pleased us both, I went back to Oakland to film this thing.

SC: How did you choose the cast?

Campus: The leads — Richard Pryor, Roger Mosley, Max Julien, Dick Anthony Williams — were all here in L.A. For almost everyone else, there was only one way. It was to go up there and open the door, and sit there for as long as I had to sit there, for days and days, to meet anybody with potential. We started off with interviews, then we narrowed the process and picked certain people. We had done more formal casting and found some people in L.A., but a lot of people got into the film just by being there. Like the pool hall scene, after Goldie gets off the bus at the beginning of the film. The pool hall scene is straight out of Oakland, straight out of that experience of the people who were there. It was not SHAFT, it was not SUPERFLY. It was really authentic.

SC: Robert Poole was Black, but you're a white director. Did that ever become an issue?

Campus: No, it never did, because we worked so closely with the whole community up there. There was Harvey Bernhard, myself and a few other [white] people, but predominantly it was an African-American picture, in front of and behind the camera. We didn't know anything at that time about being politically incorrect or correct. We just knew we had a movie to make.

SC: What was the budget for THE MACK, and where did you get the money?

Campus: The money was raised by Harvey Bernhard, through several sources, including Cinerama, which is no longer out there. The cost of the picture was ridiculously low; we were budgeted at \$400,000, but I don't think we ever came near that amount. We were literally fighting for our survival every step of the way.

In fact, there was one day, when we were in the middle of shooting one of the most important scenes, when [the rental company] came and took our equipment away. We couldn't pay the bill. One of my funniest memories is the scene where Don Gordon and the other cop (William Watson) are counting payoff money. I was trying to build an impressive-looking bankroll, and all we had between us were singles! Nobody had any money. So we

had this huge bankroll of one-dollar bills. Whenever I see the picture, I get hysterical during that scene, because there's nothing there, it's all air. And that, to me, was symbolic of the financing of the picture. There was never a moment when Harvey and I felt secure. We didn't have any money really, just enough to get by. Maybe in the end, when you add up everything including post-production, maybe we hit \$400,000, but I kind of doubt it.

SC: You weren't exactly welcomed by the Oakland locals, were you?

Campus: No, in fact we ran afoul of the Black Panthers. Suddenly, every time we were outside, trying to shoot, people started throwing things at us. We couldn't get anywhere, and finally it came down to visiting with [Black Panther Party co-founders] Huey Newton and Bobby Seale. Harvey felt it was going to be a political issue, but as it turned out it had nothing to do with politics. It was, "you're on our turf, man." So, we actually ended up paying the Black Panthers for extras. It was very funny in its own way. We hired their people, and after that, suddenly and miraculously we were able to film with no trouble. At one point, just after the picture was done, Bobby Seale came to me and said, "Michael, you're opening the film in Oakland. How would you like the opening to be a benefit for the Black Panther Milk Fund?" And I looked at him, and he looked at me, and I said, "I'm sure we'd love to do it." [Laughs]

There were so many issues involved in the making of the movie: the issue of black versus white, left versus right. Were we members of their community? No. I think the only reason that we survived was they perceived us as being fair in the film. It was a very volatile time in America, and if we had created a crappy little film, by a white producer and a white director, and that was untrue, I think they would have run us out of town. That's why I really object to the phrase "Blaxploitation," because "Blaxploitation" obviously suggests that we're exploiting the situation of African-Americans in this country. This is a very sensitive subject. We were not exploiting anyone, we were just trying to tell a true story. That's why the Ward brothers were so crucial, because they were really running the streets of Oakland. And if I had not been a documentarian, then I think we might have been in much more serious trouble.

SC: You cast Richard Pryor as Goldie's sidekick,

Slim, just before he became a big star. Looking at the film today, it's unusual to see him in a supporting role.

Campus: From the very beginning, THE MACK was not going to be anybody's vehicle. It was to be a slice of life, a true story. Because we had so little money, we weren't going to hire a major star. And I don't know if we would have hired a major star anyway — the climate was totally different from what it is today, where you have several major African-American stars. There were no Denzels, no Samuel Jacksons or Will Smiths in those days. This was just before LADY SINGS THE BLUES. Our soundtrack was Motown, and I think that's how we all met, through Suzanne De Passe, who was then [an executive at] Motown. At that point, Richard hadn't achieved his fame. People knew him from the clubs, but the meteoric rise hadn't happened.

Richard and Max Julien were close, and I think that contributed to his doing the film. But I don't think that was the only factor. I think it was the right part. I don't know whether Richard was broke or not at the time — I doubt he was flush — so he might have taken the picture under any circumstance. But I also think it was the right part for him, and he was phenomenal.

SC: Max Julien has a big cult following despite having only made a few films, like UPTIGHT, THOMASINE AND BUSHROD, and writing the screenplay for CLEOPATRA JONES. What's he like?

Campus: Max and I always got along really well. At that time, he was very exuberant, very up about this picture. It was a terrific chance for him. Again, one of the keys to achieving what we achieved is that some kind of chemistry happens. And I think that the chemistry really worked in this case. Max was the right person for the part at that time, and he and Richard had this closeness, and I think that helped. My job was to capture that.

SC: One of the myths about THE MACK is that you had real footage from the Players Ball, but it's actually a re-enactment, right?

Campus: Oh, yeah. But I attended the real event. In the actual Players Ball, the thing that astonished me — and I tried to do it as best we could in the film, with what little money we had — were the cars and the clothes. It was amazing. Everybody had a ride, and they were the most amazing cars you could

come up with, each was one of a kind. And the outfits were extraordinary, because everybody was trying to outdo one another. We had half a night to film our Players Ball. I would have loved to have three days. It was tough, but I tried to capture the exterior, the cars arriving, and the excitement at the tables. It was filmed at a local theater in Oakland. We had everything — we had the cops there. They told me that was kind of a tradition, that the cops would always be there to keep the peace.

SC: In late 1973, you announced a sequel to THE MACK, called GOLDIE, written by Paul Mooney and to be shot in Baltimore. What happened?

Campus: There were a lot of ideas for sequels. Harvey and I wanted to go ahead and make a sequel right away, because there was a lot of heat. When we opened, the box office was so big that we wanted to go make a second one right then. But Max just didn't want to do it. He wanted to direct and star in a picture, a black

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western that he ended up making [THOMASINE AND BUSHROD, 1974, d. Gordon Parks Jr.]. We thought it was a mistake, and certainly it was a mistake for us. And by the time he finished the western, the era had changed. It's amazing how things change so rapidly; at that point, in film, things shifted. When we came back, say about two years after we made THE MACK, the momentum was just gone. It was disappointing. From there, we all kind of went our separate ways. Harvey went on to do THE OMEN series, I went on to do THE EDUCATION OF SONNY CARSON, THE PASSOVER PLOT and other things.

But, looking back, I think I really made my statement in THE MACK. Goldie arrives by bus, he leaves by bus, and as a result of how he lived his life, everybody he cared about is either dead or ruined. There's nothing really left for him. So, there was a sense of closure at the time.

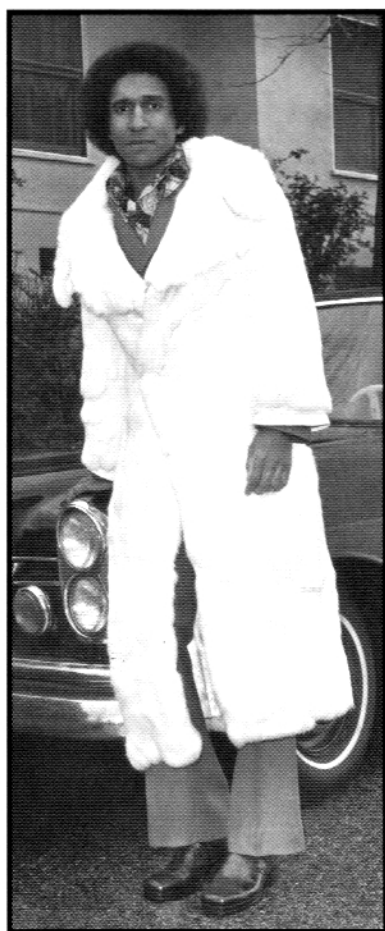
SC: Back in the day, the NAACP, CORE and other groups were reacting strongly to films like SUPERFLY. What was your experience?

Campus: We never really suffered much, I think because we were perceived, again, as saying that this was the wrong way to go. There was some initial criticism. Johnny Carson, on THE TONIGHT SHOW, pooh-poohed the picture. But all that did was help increase the lines outside the theaters. Certainly there was an element that said, "God, this is glorifying the black underworld of the pimps and pushers, and it's despicable." But that was very much a minority view, because anyone who saw the picture looked at it and said, "man, this is not glorifying, it's something that really happens." And of course it does, to this day. Pimps, players, and ho's are still out there.

And at the time, the economy was poor, and life was pretty grim. If you were a Black man in Oakland, California, life was not particularly good. There are certain people who say it's still not particularly good. You can read the reviews of the picture at that time — it was clear what we were saying. You remember the scene where Goldie is in his car, and the little kid comes up and says, "Goldie, I wanna be like you," and Goldie tells him never to say that again. That was a big point for me. It wasn't lip service — we wanted to be clear this was not the answer.

And if you think about it, the movie is really about Frank Ward. In a way, it was his life. In that sense, it was a reflection of somebody who really existed. A great tragedy for me, even though Frank was not living an exemplary life, he was somebody that Harvey Bernhard and I got close to, and his death hit us both personally. To this day, we still talk about him, he was special. The tragedy of his life is that he could have been anything in the so-called straight world, he could have been something really good.

SC: How do you feel when people refer to THE MACK as "campy"?



Max Julien as the pimpadelic Goldie

and between the director and actors, something achieved on film that really shines through. Yes, it's flawed. My God, is it flawed as a piece of film. But the impact still comes through.

SC: Despite the serious tone, there are some funny moments, like the hookers fleecing the fat white john in the bathtub, or Goldie putting a rival gangster into a car trunk full of hungry rats.

Campus: The rats scene came out of my life with the Ward brothers, because they were unafraid to do anything to break somebody. If you invaded their turf, they didn't have to kill you. That wasn't the answer. The question was, "who's more dominant?" You put somebody in the trunk of a car with a bunch of rats, the odds are you're not going to see them again.

SC: I also love the "pimp planetarium," where Goldie exerts New Age mind-control over his hoze.

Campus: That came out of my head. The Ward brothers were always trying to find funny ways to recruit women. And I wanted something very visual and interesting, so I came up with that and had a lot of fun with it. And much to my shock and amazement, it's become part of the folklore of this movie.

SC: You also shot THE EDUCATION OF SONNY CARSON and THE PASSOVER PLOT on the locations where the stories took place.

Campus: Irwin Yablans, who went on to make the HALLOWEEN movies, had met Sonny Carson in New York. Irwin came to me after THE MACK and said, "you've got to meet this guy." When I met Sonny I was intrigued, but after I read his book, I had to make the movie. I used the same technique as I

Campus: I'm not offended by that, because a lot of the clothes and things like that have changed. Obviously, 25 years has elapsed and we've made enormous changes. Some of the dialogue, some of the look, obviously they seem way over the top now, and so the label "campy" is applied to it. At the time, it wasn't perceived as being campy at all. It's very easy for somebody, through the binoculars of time, to say that it appears campy. There are certain things in the film that are inadvertently funny.

SC: Like when Goldie calls the Fat Man a "vicious-ass piece of jelly!"

Campus: I look at the film today, and there are things that make me wince. It's hard for me to look at; certainly I consider it far from my best film. Like any director, you look at your early work and you say, "my God, I could have done that better, and that better," and so on. But I must agree that certain things do appear campy now. But, so what? There has to be a reason why this film has grown and grown, and is now part of the American film culture, the African-American film community. I think the reason is that it told the truth and there was an electric chemistry within the cast,

did with THE MACK. I went to Bedford-Stuyvesant and met the people, met the gangs. And it helped enormously that these people knew about THE MACK. There's no way I could have made SONNY CARSON without their approval, because I worked with the real gangs. Those are not movie extras. I'm very proud of the fact that THE EDUCATION OF SONNY CARSON is mentioned in the AFI's book on great moments in film history.

I shot THE PASSOVER PLOT in Jerusalem, literally on the locations where Jesus Christ actually, as far as we know, lived. The Catholic church was not happy about us being there, the government of Israel was not happy about us being there. It was very difficult to make it. It was based on a very controversial novel, and when the film opened we had so many death threats and bomb threats, and once there was actually a bomb in the theater, in Los Angeles. There were certain fanatical religious elements that really objected to the film, and anywhere we tried to open it in the country, there were threats. And people aren't going to see a movie if somebody's going to blow the theater up. Martin Scorsese told me I was the forerunner of what he did with THE LAST TEMPTATION OF CHRIST. It wasn't the most astute political move I've made in my life.

And at that point, I turned to producing and writing. It was a searing, painful experience to go through, because the film had so much potential. But nobody saw it because the politics got in the way. If I had to do it over, I probably wouldn't make the film. We were trying to send a message of love, that [Christ] was perhaps the greatest man who ever lived, but the message was lost in what was perceived as my attack on the son of God.

SC: Oliver Reed died last year. What was it like directing him in Z.P.G.?

Campus: Oliver was amazing. He was so talented, and yet he'd stay up all night, every night. He was the ultimate party machine. He would roll onto the set and stay in his room, sleeping the last night off. Yet, when I said, "Oliver, I really need you," he would get into it. He was strongest at the end of the day, after he'd had his naps, and then he'd take off at night and do it all over again. That was shot in Copenhagen, and like all my other films, it's still out there. All my films seem to hang around.

SC: Why did you decide to remake THE MACK?

Campus: In the early 1990's, I got a call from some people close to Sinbad. He had a TV show at the time, and he was doing a segment about THE MACK. I went down there, as their guest, and they said, "here's Michael Camus, director of THE MACK," and there was this roar from the studio audience. Then in TRUE ROMANCE, which Quentin Tarantino wrote, there's a scene from THE MACK. Over time, it became apparent that THE MACK had been out there all along. What it had done, through the 1980's, was not diminish but continue to grow.

I went to Reuben Cannon, who was a casting director and now a producer [GET ON THE BUS, DOWN IN THE DELTA], and I told him I was thinking about [a remake], and he got excited about it. As it turned out, George Jackson [producer of NEW JACK CITY] and Doug McHenry [director of JASON'S LYRIC, HOUSE PARTY 2] had been trying to find the person who owned the rights to THE MACK, and so suddenly we were all together in a meeting, along with 20th Century Fox, talking about doing it all over again. But eventually, it was evolving into one of these big, bloated Hollywood productions, which is far removed from what THE MACK is all about. The lesson I learned is that, basically, THE MACK is not a studio picture. It was originally made independently, and it should be remade independently. It's something that needs to breathe that kind of independent air if it's going to be done right the second time. Ω

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SHARP RELIEF

by TAVIS
RIKER

Welcome to the first 'Sharp Relief' of the new millennium (actually, check back in about a year for *that* column), where we turn over a new page and...well, give SC readers more of the same demented cross-section of multimedia entertainment(?) that is best enjoyed 'refreshed'. This time out we check out the latest offerings in Lounge Pop, Goth Rock, Premium Cable slop, and Sammy!

Our column is rarely complete without either a review or a reference made to the fabulous 'Scopitones' music film series, and we're glad to announce that Scopitone specialist Gary Balaban has released another toe-tapping collection of rarities from the Scopitone vault (closet). **SCOPITONES VOL. 3 (Gary Balaban, 182 Jackson St., Brooklyn, NY 11211)** is another irresistible compilation of way cool clips, this time with a healthy dose of stateside action, with such luminaries as Brook Benton, a pre-'touched' Della Reese, and a big favorite here at SR, Joi Lansing, who is, unfortunately, trapped in "The Web of Love". As always, the clips have wall-to-wall bikini action whenever possible, and as for the ladies, scantily clad is always the preferable state of dress. You are best advised to shimmy your way to the party-approved (seriously-put these on and jump back) phenomenon that is Scopitones!

A few columns back, we raved about the great variety hour featuring Mr. Entertainment himself, Sammy Davis, Jr., and it seems that **Rhino Records** has gotten the hint, and released "**Yes I Can! The Sammy Davis Jr. Story**", an exhaustive 4-CD(!) box set which spans his entire career, from the Will Mastin Trio/Vaudeville days right through the Candyman/Bojangles-era as a Vegas headliner. The real treat here is CD no.4, which gives you a compilation of live performances, complete with between-song impressions and banter! In the 'tragic omission' dept., Sammy's killer version of "The Ballad of John Shaft" didn't make it to the box — you'll just have to hang on to your vinyl for that one. And if 4 CD's of

Sammy is a little much for your taste, I'd look around for the promo single CD sampler — you can't go wrong there. From the sparkling main ballroom, we venture way downstairs to the musty 'washout' lounge to endure **TWO TOP BANANAS (Prism)**, a made-for Showtime half-hour of fossilized vaudeville blackouts, stripteases and slapstick fodder. "Why?", you ask? Well, when the said 'Bananas' are Don Rickles and Don Adams, you get that 'car accident' curiosity. But not for long. The two Dons gamely tackle routines that were old when Uncle Miltie stole them. And with Murray Langston and buxom Carol Wayne along for the tired ride, this show will make you nostalgic for Carson's Comedy Classics. Ow.

The goth-rock minions got a major treat in 1998 when one of the key bands in the annals of mope reunited for a tour, and **BAUHAUS: GOTHAM (Metropolis)** captures the band in concert in New

York, with all original members intact (remarkable!) and in good form running through goth 'standards' like "Bela Lugosi's Dead" and "The Art of Parties". Frontman Peter Murphy still projects the moody charisma that made him a hero to the army of 'Princes of Darkness' everywhere. His solo albums are also noteworthy, and a best-of compilation, "**Wild Birds 1985-1995**" (**Beggars Banquet**) is out now, with a stateside tour this spring. Get your eyeliner and black garb in gear!...Love him or hate him, shock rocker Brian 'Marilyn Manson' Warner knows his

mass media manipulations, and his albums and best-selling autobiography show a definite savvy in creating an outrageous persona. Too bad the music is sub-par industrial glam-metal that plays better when watching the slick videos that go with them. But director Chris Nicholas has gone back to the South Florida rock scene that spawned (accurate term) Marilyn and crew for **DEMYSTIFYING THE DEVIL: an unauthorized biography of Marilyn Manson (Rockdocs Home Video)**, and although way overlong at 95 minutes, it has its share of hilarity with testimonials from Adina, the deaf "Meat and Greet" girl, in full dominatrix gear, whipping her subject while describing her sexual trysts with the band in her Marlee Matlin-style warble. Along the way, we get club owners, radio staffers, and local artists all chiming in with Marilyn stories. The filmmakers do dig up some funky (X-rated) home movies of Manson and crew (the ransacking of a groupie's underwear drawer is a lovely highlight), of course Manson saves his comments for his own books/videos/interviews, but if you want the backstory on the Manson cult, this one's for you.

Last column we promised the best of "Slam International," and a prog rock legend delivers the goods in **TERRY BOZZIO IN CONCERT (Slam Int'l — www.terrybozzio.com)**. Now if a hour of 'music for solo drumset' frightens you, it probably should. For those non-rhythmically inclined viewers, watching Terry attack his mammoth drumkit in a series of complex, sometimes avant-garde compositions might have you hitting the 'eject' button, but taken in small doses, the bril-

liance of this one-of-a-kind musician, whose roster runs from Frank Zappa and Jeff Beck to Mark Isham, is undeniable. For fans and drummers only? Most definitely. Amazing music? Ditto. Before we let you off the prog rock hook, we have to mention two notable new CD releases, both heavy on the 'notes per second' meter. Guitar legend **Allan Holdsworth's "The**

16 Men of Tain" (**Gnarly Geezer**) is a stunningly melodic fusion workout, with Allan in fine form, blistering away in the upper register while ably supported by Gary Novak and Dave Carpenter on drums and bass respectively. And for those who like their prog delivered in 'conceptual' form, the new **Dream Theater** album "**Metropolis Pt. 2: Scenes from a Memory**" (**Warner Bros.**) brings you 60 minutes-plus of metallic anthems, mile-a-minute breakdowns, moody transitional collages a la Pink Floyd, and a depressing story involving murder and mayhem. Yay!

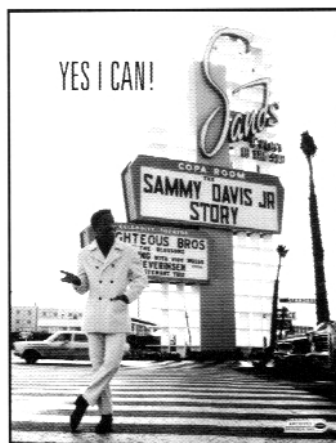
Newport is an oasis of beautiful music—and beautiful people...



From the "why isn't this film on home video?" Dep't. comes documentary filmmaker **Murray Lerner's** essential compilation of classic performances from the Newport Folk Festivals '62-'67. Simply titled **FESTIVAL (1967)**, Lerner and his crew capture many legendary musicians at a transitional period when folk, rock and blues all shared the stages at music festivals, before big business started running (ruining) the show. The list of performers includes Johnny Cash, Joan Baez, Paul Butterfield, Sonny Terry, and of course Bob Dylan. While the 'sampler of performers' style is similar to Lerner's later **MES-SAGE TO LOVE: ISLE OF WIGHT** rock doc, seeing so many rock and folk icons just 'hanging out' before the deluge is undeniably cool, if a little sad in retrospect. For classic rock/folk/blues fans, a must-see.

Just a few extra CD entries this time—it seems that the new year has brought some long-dormant performers back on the scene with new albums, and we'd like to welcome back **Steely Dan** and **Warren Zevon**, whose strong new records "**Two Against Nature**" (**Dan-Giant Records**) and "**Life'll Kill Ya**" (**Zevon-Artemis Records**) prove that even megalong breaks from the studio (Steely Dan's last album was in 1980!) doesn't mean burnout or fade away. In the 'newcomer' category, Irish crooner **Perry Blake** has returned with a superb second album of lushly orchestrated pop called "**Still Life**" (**Naive**). With eclectic support ranging from David Sylvian's brother Steve Jansen on drums, to Franciose Hardy(!) on vocals, we get a richly atmospheric collection of melancholy originals, and any album that thanks Serge Gainsbourg and Peter O'Toole in the liner notes gets my vote! Splendid!

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Sex Maniac with giant boner

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A real perverted gorefest! (X)

RASPUTIN: Evil sex-crazed

monk terrorizes World War 1

Russia! A must see! (XXX)

SLAVES IN CAGES: A rich

pervert kidnaps & whips sexy

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NEW RELEASES

BULLET ON A WIRE (Provisional; 1998). Directed by Jim Sikora (who earlier gave us the gloriously gritty *WALLS OF THE CITY*), this quietly unnerving, character-driven gem is filled with small but very potent charms. Jeff Strong stars as Raymond Brody, a dumpy, repressed insurance salesman who's definitely not a ladies' man. Instead, he decides to take out his sexual and emotional frustrations on an innocent girl named Tanya (Lara Phillips) with a prank phone call to her mom, informing her that her daughter is HIV Positive. Toss in an abusive stepfather and a handy gun, and this sick joke turns deadly, with Tanya suddenly in jail for murder. But while Tanya's boyfriend and mom seem more interested in selling their story to a true-crime TV-show, Ray suddenly begins visiting the imprisoned girl — never admitting that he was the culprit behind that fateful phone call, and quickly becoming her lone confidant. Hey, I know people who've been as desperate to meet a woman, but never so ruthless. The script by Sikora and Joe Carducci is tightly wound, with characters as genuine as they are lost. At the center of it all, Strong offers up a chilling vision of sociopathic evil lurking just under the nebbish you barely notice on the street. In fact, there are terrific performances from top to bottom, particularly Paula Killen as Ray's sick-of-his-shit sister and Jesus Lizard vocalist David Yow as boyfriend Eddie. Also look for NYC underground auteur Richard Kern as Jake the bartender. Like the best and toughest melodramas of the '50s, this is a tense tale of people on the edges of society, with John Terendy's stark b&w photography bringing additional grit and character to the Chicago backdrop. A simple yet striking gutter-noir with an unexpected pay-off, this meshes Jim Thompson with Jim Jarmusch and proves just how effective solid writing and acting can be, even on a shoestring budget.



POSSESSED [Besat] (1999). This Danish/Norwegian co-production is a dark, extremely stylish thriller that spins into some surprisingly supernatural directions. It's also graced with yet another singularly creepy performance from Udo Kier, whose recent career has bounced between arthouse weirdness (*THE KINGDOM*), Hollywood shit (*END OF DAYS*), TV-commercials, and direct-to-video slop like *RED SHOE DIARIES 7*. In this instance, 28-year-old director Anders Ronnow-Klarlund gives Kier a plumb supporting role that's perfect for his charismatic yet unpredictable presence. Ole Lemmeke stars as Soren, a young hot-shot Virologist who suspects some type of lab-made super-virus is about to break loose when a man is found in an airport, suffering from an unknown ailment. Rushed to a high-tech facility, the victim oozes, bleeds and quickly dies from massive internal hemorrhage. Aiding Soren on his obsessive quest for answers is Kirsti Eline Torhaug as Sarah, his med-school girlfriend, with the trail next leading to a young Romanian boy's similarly mysterious death, after being bitten by some "beast." And if as Soren didn't have enough obstacles in his path, he eventually teams up with a foreign doctor (Kier) who, unbeknownst to him, is actually a wanted man with a direct connection to these demises. Though it bogs down a bit during Soren and Sarah's crumbling relationship, the script eventually takes a radical turn into the land of demonic thrillers, complete the appearance of an evil star — the antithesis of the Star of Bethlehem — which foretells the birth of Satan, who will take the form of a virus, that leaps from out one host to another. Utilizing wonderfully somber backdrops, such as a burnt-out Bucharest hospital and a crematorium, Ronnow-Klarlund gives his tale a unique coating of constant dread. Lemmeke also makes a solidly immoral lead, who's so driven in his search for the truth that he's willing to dig up buried bodies for unauthorized tissue samples. Meanwhile, Kier is splendid as usual, with a scene-stealing character who ends up with some unexpected shadings. Capped off with a kick-ass conclusion, this is an excellent little horror yarn whose dead-serious approach helps it overcome any hokey script complications.

DEAD GIRL (VSOM; 1996). Whenever I stumble across some unreleased piece of shit that features several recognizable (not to mention, slumming) actors, I wonder how they got roped into that particular gig. Were they college roommates with the director? Was it a tax dodge? Did their coke dealer produce it? Whatever the cause, in this case the results are downright painful. Attempting (and failing) to be a quirky black comedy, the spectacularly bland Adam Coleman Howard (who also scripted and directed) stars as Ari Rose, an out-of-work actor with all of the charisma of Kenny G on a bad hair day. Meanwhile, founding-LA FEMME NIKITA Anne Parillaud is top-billed as a lovely stranger named Helen-Catherine who consumes Ari's passion, but when she rebuffs his sexual advances, he strangles her instead. Oblivious to his deadly actions, he hauls her home, treats her as if she were still alive, and ultimately gets lucky (if you can call screwing a pale dead body 'lucky'). Deluded into thinking she's still breathing and now in love with him, Ari is soon dragging the corpse about in public, without anyone apparently noticing. Yes, it's a distaff *WEEKEND AT BERNIE'S*, with this loopy jerk even wheeling her into a film audition, where her 'intensity' snags her the part. Absurd? Yup. Entertaining? Not on your life! I love pitch black humor, but this is nothing but 108 minutes of limp tripe, sprinkled with bombastic monologues more suitable to a crappy acting school exercise. At the center of it all, the multi-untalented Howard is as annoying as he is dull, accompanied by a perplexed supporting cast. There's Val Kilmer as Dr. Dark, Ari's unfathomably eccentric psychologist (which, hard to believe, makes his MOREAU gig look subtle), Amanda Plummer plays Helen-Catherine's roomie, who has the hots for Ari; Famke Janssen is a friend's date; Seymour Cassel turns up as a hot-shit agent; and (despite her opening credits billing) Emily Lloyd is on-screen for 10 seconds as a mom. Sure, these folks have made a lot of lousy movies during their combined careers, but this is one that nobody's going to regret has gone unseen.

THE EROTIC WITCH PROJECT and TITANIC 2000 (E.I. Independent; 1999/2000). Though best known for distributing indie horror and exploitation fare, E.I. has recently slapped their name on softcore projects which use high-profile studio releases as a springboard for low-grade eroticism...In their crude, masturbatory parody of *BLAIR WITCH's* P.O.V. antics, three co-eds head into the woods of Bacchusville, IL, looking for the 19th century Erotic Witch. Katie Keane, Darian Caine and Victoria Vega star as this investigative trio, and once they're crammed together, half-naked in a tent, the area's supernaturally-sexual stranglehold begins to take over. In the morning, they discover porn-mags and dildos scattered about their campsite, and once their clothing mysteriously disappears, they're unable to control their lesbian lust. With all of their sexual escapades recorded on-camera, this tries to be an indiscriminating voyeur's delight. It's too bad that the three leads are so vapid and unappealing, with the filmmakers not helping matters as they capture every facial blemish, implant scar and pocket of cellulite. As for their acting, they can't even play dumb sluts believably. Directed by "John Bacchus", this tiresome project includes the obligatory run through the dark woods and a close-up confession (which pans down for a lengthy bare-tit shot), in addition to unpredictable side-lines like an escaped gorilla (huh?). If you couldn't guess, it's all aimed squarely at guys who are so embarrassed to rent a real porno that this facsimile (packaged like a horror pic) will do...Meanwhile, E.I.'s latest bandwagon-jumping sex-flick grafts a lesbian-vampire scenario onto the maiden voyage of a modern-day cruise ship. Set on the *TITANIC 2000*, its passenger list includes painfully amateurish actors, saline-enhanced bimbos, and a coffin containing a blonde, scantily-dressed bloodsucker named Vladamina (Tammy Parks). Let's not forget the crappy artist who lures women back to his cabin for nude modeling, an ego-fed rock-star named Glitter Bolan (played by director John Fedele), and Tina Krause as the musician's unsatisfied girlfriend. No surprise, cutie Krause soon becomes Vladamina's choice for an undead lover. And what causes this ship to sink? It's when a geeky, homunculus-like vampire hunter misses his prey and accidentally punctures the cheap hull instead, using the wrong end of a bathroom plunger. While this offers plenty of bare female flesh from its leads, its paltry production values and lame attempts at humor are beneath those of an average porno flick, with special FX that range from a CGI 101 rendition of the ship's sinking, to a ridiculously-crude nude swim to safety. At least their BWP send-up was able to match the original's production values. Here, it's pitiful, with the cast standing in front of awful bluescreen backdrops. The only saving grace is its 85-minute running time, which is less than half that of James Cameron's equally-interminable Award-winner.

UNDERGROUND ODDITIES

HERD MENTALITY / JEFF / TV MINISTRY (1998/99/98).

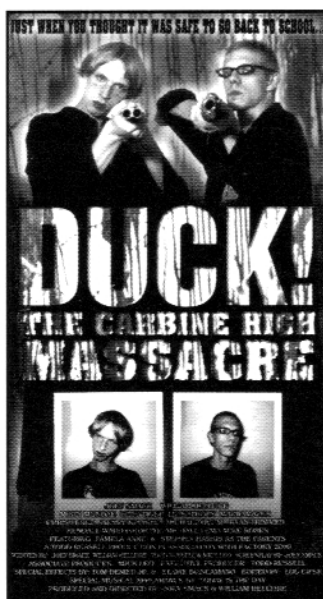
[Mark Hejnar, P.O. Box 578503, Chicago, IL 60657-8503]

Following his recent acclaim for the shock-doc AFFLICTION, Mark Hejnar has been busy as hell, as evidenced by this trio of videos. First up is *HERD MENTALITY*, a 42-minute, mixed-media compilation of Hejnar's noise-band *Pile of Cows*, which frayed delicate nerves from the early-'80s into the '90s. A hypnotic visual and aural assault, it meshes found footage (e.g. dental exams, animal sex, surgery), snippets of their eardrum-chafing performances (a highlight is their appearance at a white-trash biker picnic), along with toe-tapping titles like "Babies Are Quite Durable". All the while, Hejnar displays his talent for juxtaposing images for maximum shock value and humor. Blending 16mm, Super 8, video, and even Pixelvision, it's a brilliantly-edited blast of experimental energy, which distills a decade's worth of sonic lunacy... Hejnar's latest work is *JEFF*, an all-too-brief 4-minute dreamscape focusing on everyone's favorite cannibalistic necrophile Jeffrey Dahmer. Utilizing Milwaukee locales, recreations, and grim factual tidbits, it spins the viewer through his infamous crimes, conviction and prison demise... Ah, but the best is saved for last with *TV MINISTRY*, which, in only 11-minutes, hauls the viewer on a brain-corroding journey into Media Hell. Beginning with insipid observations from "religious" addicts who believe Television is God, Hejnar constructs a hyper-edited collage of TV's connection to sex, violence, drugs, and modern culture. Mixing commercials, movies, news and religious footage, and even Jonny Quest, the film is constructed with such rapid-fire precision that it's difficult to look away. Dazzlingly subversive and laugh-out-loud hilarious, this is not only a document of today's most extreme TV-viewers, but the images that helped keep them this stupid.

DUCK! THE CARBINE HIGH MASSACRE (1999).

[Todd Russell, c/o Factory 2000, Dept. Duck!, P.O. Box 447, Ringwood, New Jersey 07456; www.duck2k.com]

Happily confessing its offensiveness in the opening credits, this ballsy, as-far-from-P.C.-as-you-can-imagine feature loosely recreates the Columbine blood-bath and what might've led to this type of high school body-count. Strangely enough, despite all of its no-budget amateurism and cheapjack comedy, it also offers more actual insight into these fucked-up kids than any mainstream media did in the wake of the real-life tragedy. Directed, produced and starring Joey Smack and William Hellfire, they portray two black-trench-coated suburban "freaks" with screwed-up parents and dull-witted schoolmates (including Goths, Jocks, and a wheelchair retarded kid in a *STAR TREK* shirt). Beaten, abused and treated like school lepers, it doesn't take a genius (or even their inattentive parents) to see the gunfire in the distance. The ending is pure, gratuitous viciousness, as these two heavily-armed half-wits initiate a vengeful cafeteria massacre, while indulging in racism, blasphemy, mediocre gore FX, and blasting the shit out of the school's resident folk singer. Meanwhile, Misty Mundae co-stars as the cute but vapid "Bible Girl", who unsuccessfully organizes Christian Youth Group meetings and provides intentional comic relief — only to have her brainpan spattered against a wall. Clocking in at 102 minutes, most of the characters are underdeveloped clichés, the filmmaking is crude (and often snooze-inducing), but at least it has the balls to give these killers an even-handed backstory, which points the finger where it belongs. While too glib and crass to be a total success, it certainly taps into the type of white-trash attitudes, uncaring parents and social stigmas that can drive a misfit into even darker territories. Strangely enough, only weeks after I got this video, the movie received its biggest plug when the two directors were arrested because they carried guns on local school property in the movie (even though the school obviously wasn't open at



the time). Though their felony(!)-based \$2500 bond probably cost more than the entire film, you can't buy that type of hype, complete with coverage on NYC local news and typically-rabid hysteria that the filmmakers were part of "an underground group that trades blood and gore films" (in other words, they sold this video at the Chiller Theatre convention). Horrors!

THE COLLEGIANS ARE GO!! (1998).

[AD&D Prod., 5313 Peacedale Lane, Austin, TX 78723; www.flojo.com]

With a title that satirizes old-fashioned, evil-battling flicks like *THUNDERBIRDS ARE GO!*, this outrageous 24-minute tapestry twists cheapjack horror, kitsch comedy, '60s stock footage, and old-fashioned rock 'n' roll into an amusingly no-budget, retro-Zombie yarn. Set in 1964 and shot in gloriously grainy b&w Super-8 (complete with self-described "Gerald Ford-o-Vision", which amounts to hallucinogenic segues featuring that presidential putz), the title *Collegians* (Dean, Tad and Chuck) are everyday heroes — members of a Texas rock band who also fight evil whenever it rears its ugly head. In this instance, it's a bunch of cheap-suited subversives who, a year after president Kennedy's assassination, plan on unleashing a Zombie JFK and a Mummy LBJ onto the world. Who can stop them? Why, it's the *Collegians* to the rescue! Sure, the story is stupid, but these guys realize it! Besides, it's primarily an excuse to rock out on-camera with a few cool tunes, as well as a fast-paced, cinema-savvy homage to everything that made '60s junk culture so memorable. Never taking itself seriously, but always keeping the audience cheering with their ultra-crude, beer-fueled antics, the filmmakers do an expert job in integrating their 35-year-old footage with their newer (badly dubbed) segments, and a highlight has that old pop-hit "Windy" accompanying our *Collegians* as they search Dallas for the Zombie JFK — all the way to Dealey Plaza. Directed and written by Dean and Chuck Collegian, and starring the 3 *Collegians* (as well as their musical-rivals Los Tigres Guapos), this engaging romp is so much fun that you wonder why nobody used their real names.

GENERATION AX (1999).

[Horse Creek Productions, 1101 S. Beltline Blvd, Columbia, SC 29205; www.horscreekproductions.com]

This low-budget indie feature works hard to emulate the standard high school slasher flick, but with one important difference: The killers are the most likable characters! Written and directed by Tommy Faircloth (*CRINOLINE HEAD*), like his earlier pic, he begins with the standard horror clichés and twists them in weirder new directions, and (despite its slick but generic video-box artwork) the end result more in league with *HEATHERS* than *SCREAM*. We first encounter Todd (Brian Kelly) in jail, labeled a serial killer and guarded by a cop who's too stupid to live — literally. In flashbacks to two weeks earlier, we witness how Todd took this bloodthirsty road in life, and that he wasn't the only local teen drawn to murder. Meet Blair (Marina Morgan), a blonde basketcase who's so volatile that she takes a cute li'l ax to a bitchy cheerleader who wins a spot on the squad over a friend. No surprise, Todd and Blair hit it off, and soon these modern-day social vigilantes team up to slaughter the local assholes — from a stoner who raped a 15-year-old, to a rude Concession Stand employee. Kelly brings a credible intensity to his role; unfortunately, the female cast is less than memorable (with the exception of abused li'l sis Emmy Stevens), and hard to believe, most of the characters are even more insipid than today's Miramax-bred scream teens (okay, maybe they're not *that* bad). Though a bit obvious in its intentions and lax in technique, Faircloth still sneaks in some hilariously rude tidbits along the way. Sure, this 78-minute flick is cheap as hell and has its fair share of debits, but it also comes equipped with a subversive, mean-spirited edge that's too often lacking in Hollywood horror swill.

PITCH BLACK: THE LEGEND OF ALFRED PACKER (1999).

[Workmen & Rapp Presents, P.O. Box 2980, Los Angeles, CA 90078]

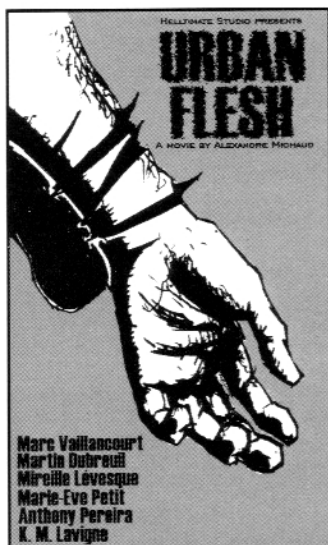
This 90-minute horror indie was obviously a labor of love for (director, co-writer, production designer, costume designer, etc.) Kevin Rapp and (producer, co-writer, photographer, musical director, etc.) Mark Workman. There's no question that it's competently made, but it's also such a downright silly idea for a movie that I found it difficult to embrace. Aarin Teich stars as a teaching assistant named Aaron, who's spent his career studying America's notorious 19th century cannibal, Alfred Packer (who reportedly dined on his great-grandpa). Skeptical about the documented facts about Packer's demise, this guy can be

chalked up as a nitwit within the first 10 minutes, when he hauls his summer school students on a deadly desert field-trip in search of new clues. No surprise, his kids begin disappearing in the night, since ol' Alfred (looking like a Gold Rush-era Skeletor) is still alive (due to a pact with Satan) and still searching for gold in his underground tunnels. Luckily, obsessive Aaron knows the supernatural hokey that'll come in handy against this hungry, immortal fiend. The film hits its most-ridiculous stride when this Packer-ghoul chases the characters through his labyrinth and eats one of 'em alive, as others fend off his equally meat-hungry minions. Alas, the rest of the time, it's amenably-paced and unsuspenseful, with character development amounting to Aaron making out with one of his students. Serious in its intent, yet only sporadically amusing in its delivery, the concept of a slasher flick with a 150-year-old undead prospector as the fiend *du jour* might be original, but it only made me long for Trey Parker's successfully-outrageous take on Packer's life, **CANNIBAL! THE MUSICAL!**

Y2K: SHUT DOWN DETECTED (1999).

[1:1 Films; www.blackrussianfilms.com]

As we all know, the Y2K media-hysteria of last New Year's Eve was a dud; electricity flowed, water ran, and except for some dinky video store up in Albany NY, all was well. But while the real Y2K fears quickly fizzled, directors John Gonzales, Trent Shumway and Slava Siderman turn those one-time worries of computer meltdown into a fast-paced sci-fi/horror romp. Shot on 16mm and only 22 minutes long, it's essentially a test reel vignette for a larger, feature-length concept, with any character development kept to a minimum, in favor of directorial finesse and action. Set on the last night of 1999 inside Kirkland Industries' Biotech genetic engineering facility, everything goes to hell at the stroke of midnight, as lights flicker, the building goes into auto-lockdown, and their computers go berserk with bizarre cloning experiments. Before you can say George Romero, something begins killing off the staff and reanimating them as predatory, spotty-faced zombies. Shot for a slim \$2100 (but looking a damned sight pricier), the filmmakers make good use of their locations and give it all a slick veneer. Still, its most impressive aspect are the incredible special effects, ranging from cannibalistic mutants and their victims, to gooey killer slime. With its only real drawback being a hasty conclusion (which only leaves us wanting more), Y2K is a kick-ass ride, as well as a terrific calling card for these talented indie filmmakers.

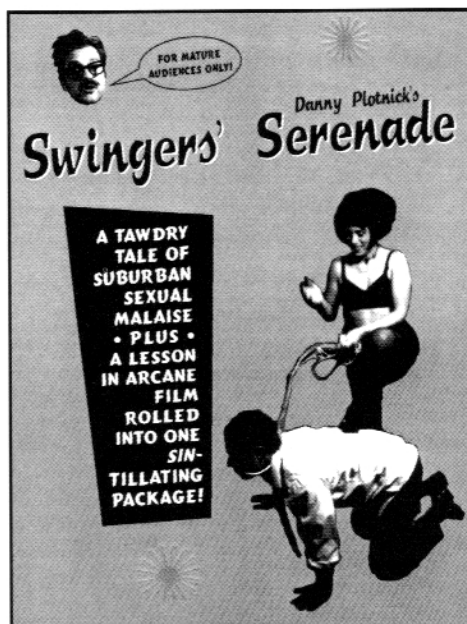


URBAN FLESH (1999).

[Hellimate Studio, 5012 Dornal, Montreal, Quebec, H3W 1W2 Canada]

Though labeled a "preliminary edit", I wanted to give this cannibal-policier (handed to me by its director at the last Fango Con) a review since, even in rough form, it's a grisly, often potent concoction. [And just before going to press, I learn that it's been picked up for distribution by Ron Bonk's Sub Rosa Studios.] When a movie opens with a dedication to grue-meister Lucio Fulci, it's setting the bar pretty high. Luckily, this gloriously sick 'n' blood-thirsty tale is ready to appease even the most extreme fans of on-screen carnage. It begins simple enough: Boy picks up girl in seedy bar, boy takes her home for a quickie, a trio of psychos follow them back to his place and eat him!

These meat-hungry fiends (joined by the gal-bait) slice him open like a hot dog bun, tear out his guts, and divvy up the innards. After this deliriously graphic intro, we're introduced to the chrome-domed inspector on the case (K.M. Lavigne, who brings the only semblance of sanity to the film), which is merely the latest devoured body they're investigating. Meanwhile, we watch these thrill-kill, flesh-eating buds toiling at their day jobs (e.g. a supermarket butcher), heating up a frozen snack (a sliced-off female breast) in the microwave, and preparing for the final half-hour's eating binge — beginning with a pregnant woman who's nailed to her kitchen counter



and has her fetus lovingly sliced from her belly. After that is gets *really* gruesome, when they ultimately pick on the wrong victim. No question, director Alexandre Michaud is one sick fuck — mind you, this is *high* praise — diving into the gore with a terrifying enthusiasm and unsettling touches. Martin Dubreuil, Marc Vaillancourt, Marie-Eve Petit, and Anthony Pereira play the barely sentient cannibals (imagine the Manson clan without the charisma), and deserve a prize for their 4-star wallowing in gooey internal organs. The film's grainy texture gives the proceedings an immediate edge, and although the accents are a tad thick during the densest dialogue, Michaud's straight-faced, almost abusively brutal agenda keeps it on track and aimed at fans of 180 Proof gore.

SWINGERS' SERENADE / I, SOCKY (1999/98).

[<http://www.sirius.com/~sstark/mkr/dp/dp-bio.html>]

Danny Plotnick has been cranking out his weird and wonderful Super-8 productions since the mid-'80s, but with the 24-minute **SWINGERS' SERENADE** he moves up to 16mm(!) with a smart, skillfully crafted parody of (1) old-fashioned exploitation and (2) long-winded cineastes. Shot in b&w, Chris Enright

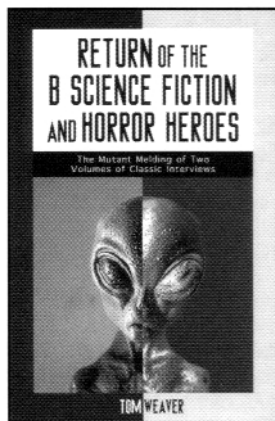
plays our pompous narrator, a "Professor" who offers a history lesson in the type of technical home-movie magazines which flourished during the '50s and '60s — back when every family owned a 8mm projector and drawer of somnambulist family vacations. Using a "script" taken from the July/August 1960 issue of *Better Movie Making*, Plotnick brings this sexy scenario to kitschy life, with Alison Faith Levy (Plotnick's wife) as a typical homemaker and Miles Montalbano as the randy door-to-door salesman. So while hubbie (Jay Hinman) toils away at work, his better half is indulging in some ass-spanking fun during a kinky game of "ride 'em cowboy", as well as pelvic grinding on the couch. Meanwhile, our annoyingly-accented Narrator occasionally interrupts the action in order to comment on this "titillating tale of sexual malaise." Complete with a vengeful denouement, it's a delightfully twisted foray into the early days of home-made movies and rampant suburban lust, complete with appropriately fab home furnishings and a hip-swiveling score...Another recent effort by Plotnick and Levy is the goofy, Super-8-shot **I, SOCKY**, which answers the eternal question: What does your sock puppet do when you're not around? When it comes to this film's rebellious sock puppet, after it's tucked into bed, it sneaks off for a day on the town — staring at other sock puppets in a store window, unsuccessfully trying to make time with a gal at a bar, checking out a 25¢ peepshow booth, and chilling out with a bong hit. Low-tech in every conceivable way, you'll either get the joke (which, since it's only 8-minutes-long, doesn't wear out its welcome), or simply wonder how dumb they all felt hauling this idiotic sock puppet around the city.

LAWYERS & OTHER WHORES (1999).

[Film Sparc, 25 Preston St. E, Orlando, FL 32804]

Tackling a surprisingly complex story of manipulation, ambition, greed, and local politics, this feature-length video by Johnny Durango is set amongst the wealthiest and most corrupt citizens of Oh! Town, Florida (with Orlando ably filling the bill). The roster of characters include über-powerful city commish "Crash" Corrigan (Gene Nash), horny liberal lawyer Bill Preston (Reggie Johnson), a Bible-thumping homophobic babe (Bethany Landing), rich stoner chicks, plus a rule-bending female mayor and all of her sycophantic employees. But the shit hits the fan when a town bigwig commits suicide on the local golf course, after secretly stashing 200 G's in government payola. Resident-stud Preston is the only one who's told where the loot is hidden, after which he's tailed by Corrigan's inept flunkies and set up for a jailbait scandal, amidst various plot digressions (which are often more interesting than its thin central storyline). Best of all, Durango takes plenty of not-so-subtle jabs at the city of Orlando and its Disney neighbors, and in true guerrilla-filmmaking fashion, uses some of the city's actual government buildings as backdrops, including a b&w photo-montage seduction that's staged during an actual city meeting. I only wish the overall screenplay was as ballsy. Even worse, Durango often gives it the look of an embellished home movie, with muddy sound, out-of-focus moments and weak supporting performances. Several multi-character conversations are even shot in one continuous take, panning back and forth to each actor — which might save on editing chores, but looks shoddy. Wildly overlong at 127 minutes, it may feature an assortment of morally-bankrupt characters, but my personal cynicism about politics and wealth runs so deep that these minor-league conspiracies left me wishing for more shocking revelations.

Books AND Zines



RETURN OF THE B SCIENCE FICTION AND HORROR HEROES by Tom Weaver (McFarland & Co, Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640; 1-800-253-2187; \$34 postpaid).

This softcover "mutant melding" of Weaver's 1988's *INTERVIEWS WITH B SCIENCE FICTION AND HORROR MOVIE MAKERS* and 1991's *SCIENCE FICTION STARS AND HORROR HEROES* offers up extensive interviews with 58 of the B-movie world's most recognizable figures, both in front of and behind the camera. Littered with over 300 photos, this brick of a book (896 whopping pages!) is a wonderful tribute to a long-gone era of filmmaking. Sections range from actors like John Agar, Susan Cabot, Beverly Garland, Anthony Eisley, and Hazel Court, to filmmakers such as schlock-kingpin Samuel Z. Arkoff, Ib Melchior,

Herk Harvey (*CARNIVAL OF SOULS*), writer Richard Matheson, and many, many more (with several of them passing away during the '90s). Weaver is a knowledgeable interviewer who keeps his questions lively and displays an obvious love for his material. He also gives his subjects plenty of room to revel in insightful anecdotes about their career highs and lows, as well as the people they worked alongside. While this repackaging may not offer any new material (with the exception of a one-page preface), if you don't already have both of Weaver's books in your library, this is your opportunity to fill that unsightly void.

SCREEN SIRENS SCREAM! by Paul Parla and Charles P. Mitchell (McFarland & Co, Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640; 1-800-253-2187; \$40.50 postpaid).

Scream queens seem to be a dime a dozen nowadays, since any actress with excessive cleavage and a lack of modesty can make it into some low-budget flick and spend the next decade signing autographs at fanboy conventions. Thankfully, this wildly entertaining 248-page hardcover avoids these current bimbos in order to interview 20 actresses who — from the '30s to the '60s — helped pave the way for today's damsels in distress. While some of their names might not be immediately recognizable, their on-screens roles have left a permanent legacy within the sci-fi, horror and suspense genres. Recalling their overall careers, as well as specific roles which made them memorable, highlights include *THIS ISLAND EARTH*'s Faith Domergue, *THE MAN FROM PLANET X*'s Margaret Field, *THE BRAIN FROM PLANET AROUS*' Joyce Meadows, and *Playboy* photo-fave June Wilkinson. Personally, some of the more interesting Q&A's are with ex-child actresses like Sandy Descher (the catatonic il'l girl in *THEM*) and Marilyn Harris (the flower girl from *FRANKENSTEIN*), as well as Mexican starlets Kitty de Hoyos and Evangelina Elizondo. Well-researched and always respectful (even when the actresses' work has been less-than-critically-acclaimed), the book is sprinkled with film stills and publicity shots of these lovely ladies, along with brief career-profiles. This is a fascinating book that covers a lot of diverse territory and will certainly appeal to any fans of early-genre filmmaking and the women who helped make these movies so memorable.



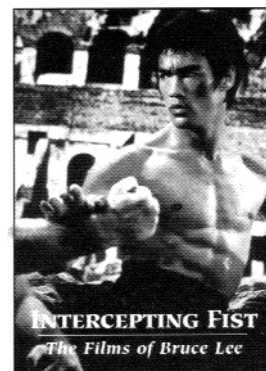
BIZARRISM by Chris Mikul (Critical Vision; www.headpress.com; £11.95).

This delightfully-deranged assortment of true-life essays is both hilarious and horrific, while lovingly detailing the wonderful world of misguided basketcases and self-destructive eccentrics. Author Chris Mikul began this obsession in the early-'80s, after reading the story of Donald Crowhurst (an average bloke who suddenly decided to enter a yachting contest to circumnavigate the globe, with

memorably insane results), and beginning as a workplace-photocopied 'zine, it finally evolved into this extraordinary book. Its topics range everywhere from cults, to true crime, to folklore, to any nutty item that caught Mikul's eye — but always remains focused on seemingly half-baked individuals who loved to rock society's boat. You've got Richard S. Shaver and his '40s-era series of *Amazing Stories* rants (which were similar to L. Ron Hubbard's sci-fi-themed religion); the life and death of "Lobster Boy" Grady Stiles Jr.; plus that wacky Mormon religion and its most extreme leaders. Even better, there's also a decidedly down-under flavor, thanks to Aussie-kooks like self-proclaimed witch Rosaleen Norton and anti-"choiton" sex theorist William Chidley. Still, while many of the articles are just plain goofy, there's also the occasional grim topic, such as Anne Hamilton-Byrne and her cult of adopted, malnourished, secluded children. Deliriously researched, this is a paranoid's wet-dream, as it bounces from UFO's to ancient races, as well as humankind's ability to embrace these wacko agendas:

INTERCEPTING FIST: THE FILMS OF BRUCE LEE edited by Jack Hunter (Glitter Books, \$14.95).

Bruce Lee might be long gone, but his legacy continues on in this collection of in-depth essays which analyze and embrace his all-too-brief on-screen career and charisma. This slim, 104-page softcover is packed with illustrations and begins with a quick synopsis of his life, his death, and the myriad rumors which surfaced following his demise. Then it's onto chapters detailing with each of Lee's starring roles, beginning with his freshman debut in *THE BIG BOSS* (US: *FISTS OF FURY*), which out-grossed the current Hong Kong box-office champ, *THE SOUND OF MUSIC* and turned him into a working class hero for Asian moviegoers. That was followed by *FIST OF FURY* (US: *THE CHINESE CONNECTION*), *WAY OF THE DRAGON* (US: *RETURN OF THE DRAGON*), the post-mortem release of the legendary *ENTER THE DRAGON*, as well as the hideously-patchwork *GAME OF DEATH*. Since the book's main text was divided amongst four writers (Andy Lowe, Kieron Butler, Brian Harrison, and Mikita Brottman), its style might vary a bit, but they always display a genuine admiration for this action-icon, as they dissect each feature with occasionally too-lengthy synopses, behind-the-scenes info, audience reaction, and gossipy tidbits. I'm just thankful that it wasn't all written like editor Jack Hunter's 2-page preface, which contains over a dozen footnotes (which are actually lengthier than the original text!), and reminded me of old college writing assignments, which stressed academic form over simple readability.



A TASTE OF BLOOD: THE FILMS OF HERSCHELL GORDON LEWIS by Christopher Wayne Curry (Creation Books; \$22.95).

Over the years there's been a lot written about the "Godfather of Gore", Herschell Gordon Lewis, and his exploitation classics (particularly now that most of his movies are available through Something Weird Video) but you'd be hard-pressed to find a more affectionate tribute than this 252-page softcover. Author Curry makes no bones about it; he's been a H.G. Lewis fanatic ever since his teenage years, when he first popped a copy of *BLOOD FEAST* into his VCR, and his passion oozes from his writing. The book's structure is rather simple, beginning with a film-by-film breakdown of Lewis' eclectic career, with synopses and insightful info on everything from his earliest nude flicks, to H.G.'s full-blown grue gems like *THE GORE GORE GIRLS*, to drive-in oddities such as *SHE DEVILS ON WHEELS*. Let's not forget its six-pack of ingratiating interviews, beginning with a 14-page conversation with Herschell himself, followed by David F. Friedman, Bill Rogers, David Krogh, Hedda Lubin, and Mal Arnold (*BLOOD FEAST*'s Fuad Ramses). If that weren't enough, the book also includes a complete filmography, plenty of cool ad slicks, 8 color pages of Lewis' goriest moments, and (in one of my favorite touches) the lyrics to some of H.G.'s most memorable, toe-tapping tunes. All in all, an engaging and informative guide to one of the pioneers of schlock-'n'-shock cinema.

VIDEO DISTRIBUTORS

ALPHA BLUE ARCHIVES, Dept. Shock, P.O. Box 16072, Oakland, CA 94610. An amazing array of vintage sleaze, from softcore fare to XXX-gems. Visit 'em at: www.alphabluearchives.com.

BLACKEST HEART MEDIA, Shawn Smith, P.O. Box 3376, Antioch, CA 94531-3376. Packed with the weirdest, most twisted videos, t-shirts, comics, DVD's, and CD's. Recommended. Their catalog is \$3, or head to: www.blackestheart.com.

BLOODGORE, P.O. Box 543, Iselin, NJ 08830. \$2 (cash only) gets you their catalog, filled with horror, gore, Mondo movies, and X-rated sleaze.

CASA VIDEO, 2905 East Speedway, Tucson, AZ 85716. A fine source for mail-order rentals & sales with an on-line catalog at www.casavideo.com.

EUROPEAN TRASH CINEMA, P.O. Box 12161, Spring, TX 77391-2161. Continually unearthing rare EuroTrash and artsy gems, their \$3 catalog is filled with excellent quality oddities. Recommended! ETC is on-line at: www.diabolik.demon.co.uk.

JUST FOR THE HELL OF IT, P.O. Box 19, Dept. SC, Butler, NJ 07405. \$3 gets you their mind-blowing catalog (checks made out to Mike Decker) featuring the coolest grindhouse oddities, plus the old Gore Gazette video collection! Recommended!

KITLEY'S KRYPT, P.O. Box 2921, Aurora, IL 60507. A good selection of used videos, posters,

books, and all sorts of horror fare. Check 'em out on-line at: www.kitleyskrypt.com.

LUMINOUS FILM & VIDEO WURKS, P.O. Box 1047, Dept. SC, Medford, NY 11763. From EuroSex epics and spaghetti westerns, to arthouse fare never released in the US; all tapes have full-color packaging. Visit them at: www.lfvw.com.

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SOMETHING WEIRD VIDEO, P.O. Box 33664, Seattle, WA 98133. Make this your first stop for grindhouse-era gems! Their outrageous catalog is crammed with rare sexploitation and Deuce faves. Check 'em out at: www.somethingweird.com.

TAPES OF TERROR, c/o P. Riggs, 11430 Mullins Dr., Dept. SC, Houston, TX 77035-2632. A wide array of horror & cult oddities. Their catalog is \$2, or visit: www.morticiasmorgue.com/tot.html.

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VIDEO HOLOCAUST, P.O. Box 3187, Waterbury, CT 06705. Crammed with Eurotrash dementia and classic XXX-porn, send for their FREE catalog.

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VIDEO WASTELAND, P.O. Box 81551, Cleveland, OH 44181-1551. In addition to their mail-order video rental service, VW sells books, mags and soundtracks. \$13 gets you their 160-pg catalog, and visit them at: www.videowasteland.com.

WITCHING HOUR VIDEO, P.O. Box 806, University Station, Dept. SC, Lexington, KY 40506-0025. Filled with video horror, sleaze and Asian craziness, \$4 gets you their new catalog. Check them out at: www.witchinghourvideo.com.

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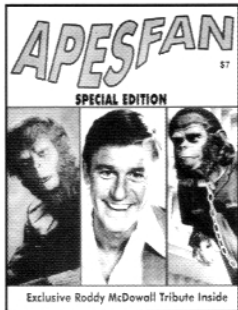
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MAGS, ZINES & SMALL-PRESS PUBLICATIONS

Here's the latest batch of 'zines to come my way. These people put a load of time, energy and money into their mags, so give 'em all the support you can; if you're reluctant to send well-concealed cash, it's best to make checks payable directly to their editor. **Note to 'zines:** Sorry, but unless your mag has *something* to do with movies, I can't promise you a plug (in other words, please don't send purely literary or music 'zines!).

APESFAN: SPECIAL EDITION (George R. Reis, 870 Stratford Drive, East Meadow, NY 11554; \$7). Devoted to everything you've always wanted to know about *Planet of the Apes* and its sequels, editors Joe Lozowsky and George R. Reis display the type of passion which has fueled all of the best 'zines, and articles range from childhood recollections of "Going Ape!" to reviews of soundtrack albums and Hasbro toys. Interviews include Kim Hunter, Natalie Trundy, Bradford Dillman, Don Pedro Colley, Ted Post, plus a tribute to the late, great Roddy McDowall. Recommended!



ASIAN CULT CINEMA #25-26 (P.O. Box 16-1919, Miami, FL 33116; \$6 apiece, or 6 issues for \$30). The latest editions of this always-informative digest continue to focus on the coolest topics. Covering both the high and low end of Asian cinema, they include current news & gossip, tributes to Ti Lung and Danny Lee, the making of *Kamen Rider*, and excellent interviews with Yasuharu Hasebe (*Alleycat Rock*) and Kiyoshi Kurosawa (*Cure*).

ASKEW REVIEWS #5 (Denis Sheehan, P.O. Box 684, Hanover, MA 02339; \$2). The latest edition of this enjoyable fanzine begins with a trip to Central NY's First Annual B-Movie Film Festival, features an interview with *Bottom Feeders* director Tom Baumann, and tosses in several dozen amusing music and video reviews (covering titles like *Inbred Rednecks* and *Slime City*).

BADAZZ MOFO #5 (David Walker, P.O. Box 40649, Portland, OR 97240; \$5 ppd). No question, David Walker has one of the coolest 'zines around, focusing on the wonderful world of blaxploitation and beyond. Now for the bad news: In the editorial we learn that this is the last issue for the next year or two... This time around we get a 21st Anniversary tribute to *The Warriors*, plus a guide to Bad-Ass Chick movies and interviews with Rosanne Katon & Gloria Hendry. Packed with attitude and often hilarious writing (warning: if you're eating pizza while reading it, you're liable to have hot mozzarella pourin' out of your nose), it doesn't get much better. Check 'em out at www.badazzmofo.com.

CASHIERS DU CINEMART #10 (Mike White, P.O. Box 2401, Riverview, MI 48192; \$12 for 5 issues). One of my favorite 'zines just continues to get better and better. This issue covers the Lone Wolf & Cub babycart series, review-laced excursions to the '99 Chicago Underground Film Festival & Toronto Film Festival, an interview with actor-turned-director Keith Gordon, and further ragging on *Film Threat*. Always humorous, often acidic, very informative, and highly recommended.

CINEMAD #2 (Mike Plante, P.O. Box 43909, Tucson, AZ 85733-3909; \$10 for 4-issues). The sophomore edition of this excellent mag covers a wide range of territory in its 64 pages. There are interviews with indie filmmaker Jem Cohen, cinematographer Conrad Hall and character actor fave Tracy Walter, as well as such lovably odd tangents as "Confessions of a Seat Filler" and existential car movies. An always intelligent, often twisted dive into cinematic enlightenment.

CinéXS (Midnight Media, P.O. Box 211, Huntingdon, PE18 8WD England; \$8 ppd). Edited by Paul J. Brown, this slick 32-page booklet was created in connection with a UK exploitation fest that featured David Hess, Gunnar Hansen and plenty of rare film screenings. Even if you missed the event, this is a fun li'l read, containing interviews with both Hess & Hansen, plus reviews of *Last House on the Left*, *Death Stalks in High Heels* and *Night Hair Child*.

DIABOLIK #2 (Midnight Media, P.O. Box 211, Huntingdon, PE18 8WD England; \$12 ppd / Editorial address: 15 Netley Close, Cheam, Surrey, SM3 8DN, England). A slick, beautifully crafted magazine devoted to the fabulous world of Italian horror, sex and cult cinema. Editor Jason J. Slater pulls together a wide array of topics, including an informative guide to Italian Apocalypse/Sci-Fi movies, plus articles on Terry-Thomas' Italian-lensed films, interviews with directors Renato Polselli and Al Festa, and a visit to FantAsia '98.

DUCHACEK #36 (Pavel Zdarek, Tupolevova 516, Praha 9, Letnany 199 00). A Czech magazine focusing on horror, sci-fi and fantasy, this edition contains articles on Hollywood slop like *The Mummy* and *The Phantom Menace*, a retrospect on Richard Stanley's *Hardware*, plus film & book reviews. I couldn't understand one single word, but I appreciated its sizeable plug for *Shock Cinema*.

FILM GEEK #3 (Alan Fare, P.O. Box 501113, Tulsa, OK 74150-1113; One 33¢ stamp). This 16-page Xerox-zine reviews a handful of cult faves (*Criminally Insane*, *Mother's Day*, John Water's *Desperate Living*) & 'zines. It's thin, but also heart-felt and definitely worth one lousy postage stamp.

LIQUID CHEESE #10 (Dave Kosanke, 8123 West Margaret Lane, Franklin, WI 53132; \$4 ppd). Focusing on "movies and music to mangle your mind," this home-made mag is a groovy grab-bag of fringe media & culture — from a handful of movie reviews and unheralded serial killers, to their visits to Monster Rally '99 and the Milwaukee Metalfest.

LITTLE SHOPPE OF HORRORS #14 (Richard Klemensen, P.O. Box 3107, Des Moines, Iowa 50316; \$7.95). It's been three years since the last issue of LSoH, but once you get a look at this amazing, 132-page(!) issue, you'll definitely under-

stand why! This time around "the journal of classic British horror films" dissects *The Brides of Dracula*, as well as interviews with the luscious Yvette Stensgaard, Madeleine & Mary Collinson, make-up master Roy Ashton, and many more. Meticulously researched and generously sprinkled with photos, this is a must-have for any Hammer-fan.

MICRO-FILM #1 (Jason Pankoke, Opteryx Press, P.O. Box 45, Campaign, IL 61824-0045; \$10 for 3-issues, or \$5 ppd. each). Covering the wide world of truly independent filmmaking (i.e. directors who end up selling their own blood instead of selling out), this premiere issue features profiles of directors Eric Stanze, Mike Trippiedi and Josh Becker, Don May Jr. of Synapse Films, plus a terrific article on film 'zines (with several quotes courtesy of your humble SC editor). Nicely designed and printed, with an agenda that deserves your support.

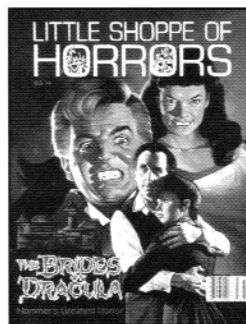
NEON MADNESS #5 (Andrew Copp, P.O. Box 081, Dayton, OH 45404-0081; \$10 for 2-issues). This thick, digest-sized 'zine is proudly labeled "The Death Issue," thanks to several short pieces devoted to Snuff-related cinema. There are also favorite websites, best alternative albums of the '90s, and loads of video reviews — from studio fare (*Ravenous*) to cult gems (*Organ*, *Violated Angels*).

ROASTING RODERICK #4 (Parker Anderson, P.O. Box 1285, Prescott, AZ 86302). An old-school, typewriter-'n'-Xerox 'zine; this edition is a mixed-bag of film & video reviews written by editor Anderson and Dave Szurek, ranging from no-budget horror, cult oddities & mainstream titles that have been collecting dust on vid-store shelves for years.

STREETCLEANER / MOVIE HELL #8 (Dymon Enlow, PMB 146, 1515 N. Town East Blvd. Suite 138, Mesquite, TX 75150-4142; \$1 or 3 stamps). The latest issue of this 18-page review-zine once again tackles a diverse batch of videos. Where else will you find Radley Metzger's *The Princess and the Showgirl* next to *It Happened One Night*? Though I disagree with some of the opinions, it's difficult not to respect a 'zine that gives Ozu's *Early Summer* and Bunuel's *Un Chien Andalou* their highest rating.

TRASH TIMES #7 (Rich Behrens, P.O. Box 248, Glenview, IL 60025; \$2 ppd). The latest edition of this fun li'l 24-page digest includes a cool interview with the ever-beloved Tura Satana, as well as loads of brief-but-eclectic music, 'zine and film reviews (ranging from *Black Shampoo* to *Terror Firmer*).

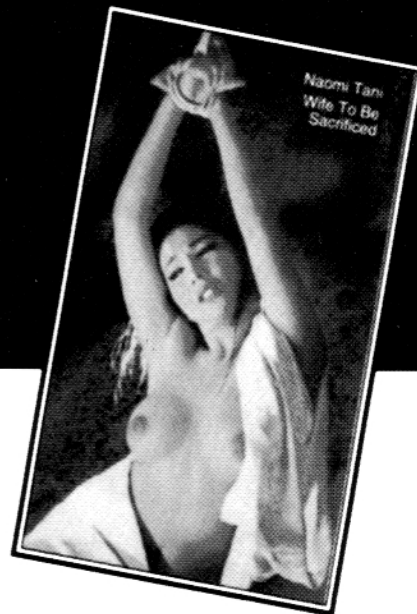
VEX #4 (Deadwood Press, P.O. Box 2067, NY, NY 10108; \$3.95). An always-entertaining mag devoted to the most eccentric fringes of movie culture, this issue's highlight is a delightfully-ghoulish guide to real-life motion picture murders and mishaps, including Dar Robinson, Michael Findlay, H.B. Halicki, Richard Lynch, and over 100 more. We also get a lengthy history of Gorilla Cinema, a porn theatre tribute by Jack Stevenson, an interview with NYC's eccentric Radioman, and plenty of hilarious sidebars. Recommended!



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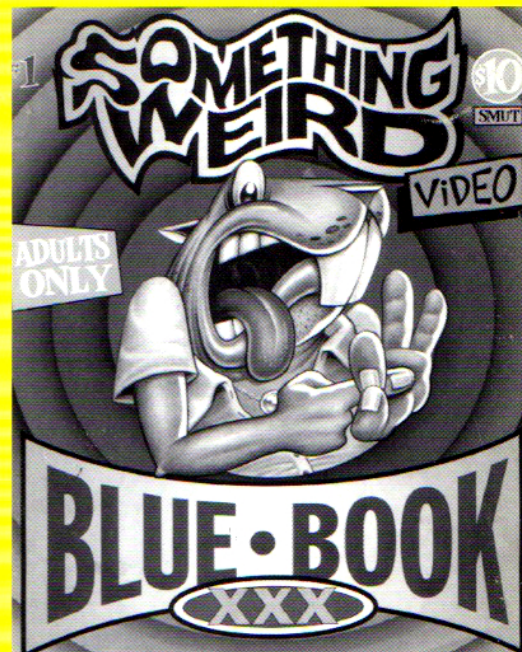
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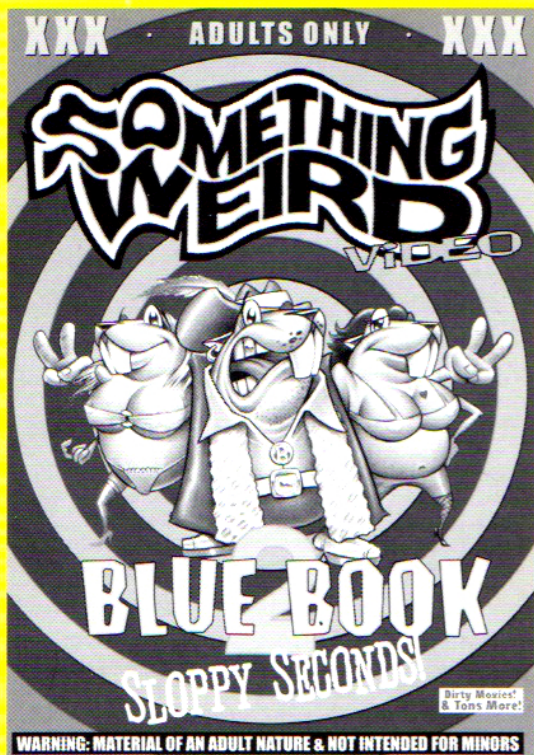
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